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Rutherford County Historical Society

PUBLICATION NO.9



Dr. James M. Dill



Summer 1977

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE 37130

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Rutherford County Historical Society

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THE COVER

Dr. James Madison Dill (1831-1916) a native of Rutherford County, for whom the community of Dilton was named, is featured on the cover of this publication. His parents were Isaac and Gilley Cooper Dill who were natives of South Carolina. The old country doctor, a highly respected member of the community, was buried in the Harrell Cemetery at Dilton.

Rebecca L. Smith is the author of this very fine history of Dilton. The Rutherford County Historical Society is proud to publish this history which Miss Smith has prepared.

Thanks to Rutherford County Judge Ben Hall McFarlin and Mrs. Susan R. Jones for their assistance in publishing this book.

Murfreesboro, Tennessee

1977

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RUTHERFORD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PUBLICATION NO. 9

Published by the

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Q U E R I E S

Prepared by Mrs. D. C. Daniel, Jr.

IMPORTANT: Publication of queries in this column is free to all members as space permits. Each query must appear on a full sheet of paper which must be dated and include member's name and address. Please type if possible. Queries should give as much pertinent data as possible, i.e. approximate/actual dates of birth, marriage, death, etc. Queries must refer to RUTHERFORD COUNTY, TENNESSEE FAMILIES and immediate connections. Address all correspondence relating to queries to the Society, P. O. Box 906, Murfreesboro, Tenn. 37130.

Deadline Dates: March 31 for Summer Publication and August 31 for Winter Publication.

- No. 1 MORGAN-WINSTON: Carey Morgan b. VA. CA 1776-80 (parents: Elizabeth Clay and Joshua Morgan, m. 1817, Ruth. Co., Nancy Winston b. 1791). Is 1860 tombstone in old Murfreesboro Cemetery for Nancy Morgan, wife of Gary, hers? Nancy is daughter of Nathaniel Winston per Ruth. Co. deeds CA 1824. Children: John m. in Denmark: Robert d. without issue; Samuel m. Ruth. Co. 1860's, Tabitha Avent: James m. Rachel Posey (great-granddaughter of Gen. John Coffee's sister): Elizabeth m. J. C. Wortham: Mary m. Sam Moore. Compiling Morgan family tree, especially need to know where they came from in Virginia and whether they settled temporarily somewhere else before coming to Ruth. Co. Mrs. James E. Smotherman, Route 1, College Grove, Tenn., 37046.
- No. 2 WARREN-SOAPE/SWOPE/SOPE/SOAP/SWOAP: Need parents, family of Elizabeth Warren b. 8 April 1821 Cannon Co., Tenn., d. 18 April 1851, Panola Co., Tex., m. 7 Sept. 1840 Cannon Co., Tenn., Absalom Fowler Soape, son of James Soape & Elizabeth Fowler. Wants to correspond with any person interested in Soape (& various spellings) family. Eleda Soape Decherd, 5603 Green Craig, Houston, Tex., 77035.

A member of our society is a genealogist: Mrs. Lalia Lester
1307 W. Northfield Blvd.
Murfreesboro, Tenn. 37130
Tel. (615) 896-9089

INTRODUCTION

This history represents a blend of anecdotal information with information obtained from deeds, wills, tax and census records, newspapers, and books. Raymond B. Harrell and Jack R. Mankin made their manuscripts available as source material. Oral information was provided by several men and women who either live now or have lived in the Dillon community. Two of these, who were especially helpful, are Mrs. Clemmie Harrell Ring and Mr. Joe J. Jernigan, both of whom are ninety-three years old and blessed with excellent memories. I am grateful to my parents, William Hoyt and Pearl Marlin Smith, and to my grandparents, Ernest L. Smith (1871-1968) and Mary Ann Harrell Smith (1881-1960), for their memories of life in the community. Stories passed on by them were drawn not only from their own personal experiences but also from those of their parents and grandparents and from friends and neighbors who lived before them in Dillon. I am also indebted to Roy E. Tarwater, who suggested that this history be written; to all those who contributed written or oral information to be used as source material; and especially to Mrs. Jean Overall Thompson for reading the manuscript and making suggestions for its improvement.

Rebecca L. Smith

HISTORY OF DILTON

by

Rebecca L. Smith

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LOCATION

The Dilton Store, situated on the southeast corner of the Bradyville Pike and the Dilton-Mankin Lane, marks the center of the Dilton community. History records that early settlers moved in long before it acquired the name of "Dilton" in 1887,¹ the year the community acquired a post office named for Dr. James Madison Dill, who was physician, postmaster, and storekeeper.² The center of the community is five and one-half miles southeast of the Rutherford County Court House and two and three-tenths miles by way of Bradyville Pike from the present city limits of Murfreesboro. (See map on page 45.)

The original settlement had its center at Black Fox Camp, located around an unusually large spring about one and one-fourth miles from the Dilton Store toward Murfreesboro.³ For many years this spring supplied the town of Murfreesboro with water.⁴ Because of the extraordinary supply of water at Black Fox Spring and the influence of men such as William Kelton and Joel Childress, who were among the first settlers, it was considered in 1811 as a possible site for Rutherford County's seat of government.⁵

¹According to Mrs. Jo Anne Kelton, Dilton was spelled with two l's during the late 1800's. Mrs. Kelton is a great granddaughter of Dr. and Mrs. Dill, and her husband, Sammie Kelton, is a descendant of William and Elizabeth Kelton.

²Raymond Harrell, "Genealogy of the Dill Family" (Workbook, n.d., n. pag.).

³Carlton Sims, History of Rutherford County (Murfreesboro: Sims, 1974), p. 19. ⁴Interview with Roy E. Tarwater, December, 1976.

⁵The Goodspeed Histories of Maury, Williamson, Rutherford, Bedford, and Marshall Counties of Tennessee, reprinted from Goodspeed's History of Tennessee, 1886 (Columbia, TN: Woodward and Stinson, 1971), p. 814.

CIRCUMSTANCES PRECEDING AND SURROUNDING THE EARLY SETTLERS

Approaching the Dilton community from Murfreesboro, one sees a countryside quite different in appearance from the virgin forest land which was used as a campground by the Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Choctaw Indians when they came here to hunt each year prior to 1790.¹ However, if these Indians could return today, they would recognize the spring beside which they camped, the creek where they fished, and the hills which form a blue backdrop in the southeast for the Dilton area scenery. Three of the hills are known to Dilton residents today as the Gowan, the Dave, and the Long Ridge.² It would be interesting to know the names by which they were known to Enolee.³ Enolee was the Indian name for Black Fox, the Cherokee chief⁴ for whom the spring was named.⁵ Indian trails through the woodlands were known as traces; several traces led to Black Fox Spring. (See map on page 9 .) The Indians used the spring and the area around it as a base for hunting expeditions, as well as for surprise attacks on the early settlers. Prior to the Indian uprisings it served as a trading post where the Indians exchanged wares with the early settlers.⁶

It is tempting for some to think that life for the Indians who camped around the spring was idyllic and peaceful before the first settlers from

¹Sims, p. 4.

²Interview with Charles B. Smith, December, 1975.

³John P. Brown, Old Frontiers (Kingsport, Tenn.: Southern, 1938), pp. 311, 331. Other spellings used were Enola and Inali.

⁴A. W. Putnam, History of Middle Tennessee (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1971, first published, 1859), p. 479.

⁵Sims, pp. 64, 65.

⁶Ibid.

North Carolina and Virginia arrived. The woodlands and streams provided a plentiful amount of food and furs while the Indians hunted in this area for bear, elk, deer, and a large variety of smaller wild creatures.¹ Although their life-style has appeal for some people in our complex time, we know that life for the Indians was not always simple and peaceful. The Cherokees, Chickasaws, Chocktaws, and Shawnees in Tennessee had often fought among themselves,² but they were to become a united people in the early 1790's, when they had in common a desire to push back the streams of white settlers from Virginia and North Carolina.

Black Fox's name and mark appear on the Treaty of Holston,³ signed in 1791, along with the names and marks of other Cherokee chiefs. Forty chiefs, twelve hundred warriors, squaws and children assembled at White's Fort (Knoxville) early in July of that year and agreed upon a treaty which ceded a large portion of that area of Tennessee to the United States.⁴ In return, the Cherokee nation received certain presents and an annual payment of \$1,000 a year; feeling themselves intimidated and tricked, the Cherokees were dissatisfied with the Treaty of Holston.⁵

According to John Brown, evidence that the Indian troubles were becoming serious by 1792 is found in the American State Papers, Indian Affairs, Vol. 1, p. 264. The Shawnees invited the Southern Indians to join

¹C. C. Henderson, The Story of Murfreesboro (Murfreesboro: News Banner, 1929), p. 6.

²W. R. L. Smith, The Story of the Cherokees (Cleveland, Tenn.: Church of God Publishing House, 1928), p. 17.

³Brown, p. 311.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 312.

them in war against the United States and hoped to drive back its entire western frontiers.¹ Dragging Canoe, an uncle of Black Fox, was sent as a messenger from the Cherokee nation to the Chickasaws with a plea for confederation, but he died soon after he returned.² At a Cherokee Council at Estanaula,³ June 26-30, 1792, Black Fox had these words to say in eulogy:

The Dragging Canoe has left the world. He was a man of consequence in his country. He was a friend both to his own and the white people. But his brother is still in place, and I mention now in public, that I intend presenting him with his deceased brother's medal; for he promises fair to possess sentiments similar to those of his brother, both with regard to the red and white. It is mentioned here publicly, that both whites and reds may know it, and pay attention to him.⁴

Because of the surprise attacks on the Tennessee settlers, scouting parties were sent out in 1792.⁵ Abraham Castleman, the favorite spy of the settlements, who withdrew from his men and scouted alone is described as "fearless, with a quick sight, and a sure shot. He made no noise or tramp as he walked and, with his body a little bent, he seemed ever looking for Indians or marks on the trees."⁶ When he returned from this mission, he reported that he had been as far as Black Fox's Camp, where he had seen signs indicating that a numerous party of Indians had been there shortly before him.⁷ Castleman had spied upon the Indians there before

¹Ibid., p. 328.

²Ibid., p. 329.

³Spellings used by some other sources are Ustanaula and Oostanaula. It is located in Georgia on the Coosawatie River a few miles above its junction with the Canasauga.

⁴Brown, p. 331.

⁵John Haywood, Civil and Political History of the State of Tennessee (Knoxville: Tenase, 1969, c. 1823), pp. 368, 369.

⁶Putnam, p. 392.

⁷Ibid.

and knew the hunting season was not over; therefore he was concerned about their absence.¹ He felt it was an ominous sign and reported this to his superiors, who regarded his assessment with skepticism. In a letter to Governor Blount on August 22, 1793, General James Robertson wrote that Abraham Castleman was not only a soldier but also a disorderly person who had several of his relations killed by Indians.² Soon after Castleman made his report, a party of two hundred and eighty Indians³ attacked Buchanan's Station about five miles south of Nashville⁴ on September 30, 1792.⁵ The Indians being Creeks (83) and Cherokees (197),⁶ Black Fox and his people could have been among them, as Castleman feared. General Robertson apologized to Castleman and, summoning a force of 150 men, marched in pursuit and followed the retreating Indians as far as Stewart's Creek, reporting that at least seven hundred Indians were in the war party.⁷

In the spring of 1793, soldiers were sent again into the area by General Robertson with hope of checking the forays and plunderings of the Indians by a display of military power, but they turned back at Black Fox Spring.⁸ Since this mission failed to accomplish its purpose, Major James Ore's expedition of 550 men was sent out by General James Robertson.⁹

¹Putnam, p. 393.

²Thomas E. Matthews, General James Robertson (Nashville: Parthenon, 1934), p. 344.

³John Trotwood Moore, Tennessee, The Volunteer State (Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1923), vol. 1, p. 214.

⁴Haywood, p. 314.

⁵James G. Ramsey, The Annals of Tennessee (Charleston, S. C.: Walker and Jones, 1853), p. 600.

⁶Moore, loc. cit.

⁷Putnam, p. 394.

⁸Henderson, p. 10.

⁹Haywood, p. 407.

They followed the Indian trace by way of Murfreesboro and camped at Black Fox Spring on September 7, 1794. On the next day they proceeded toward Nickajack and arrived there on the following Thursday.¹ At Nickajack and Running Water, they defeated the Indians, finding many scalps and a quantity of ammunition powder and lead lately arrived from Spain.² In a letter to Robertson, Major Ore says "From the best judgment that could be formed, the number of Indians killed in the two towns must have been upwards of fifty and the loss sustained by the troops under my command was one lieutenant and two privates wounded."³

A legend grew that en route to Nickajack when General Ore's men overcame a group of Indians at Black Fox Spring, the Black Fox jumped into the spring and disappeared to avoid capture. Some said he drowned, but the story that he came out alive where the waters emerge from the earth again at Murphy Spring⁴ is the most delightful facet of the legend for those who have listened to the story tellers over the years. When bones were found in Murphy Spring Cave, the legend took another twist. The bones were said to be the bones of Black Fox.⁵ The legend which allowed him to escape alive is the more reasonable one as his name and mark appear in the Treaty with the Cherokee of 1805.⁶ It appears again in the Treaty with

¹Ibid.

²Matthews, p. 368.

³Ibid., p. 367.

⁴Sims, p. 65. Murphy Spring is located at the edge of the Bellwood Estates on the hillside across Broad Street from Mercury Blvd. The water which submerges at Black Fox Spring comes up again at Todd Lake and again at Murphy Spring.

⁵Henderson, p. 11.

⁶C. J. Kappler (comp.), Indian Treaties, 1778-1883 (New York: Interland, 1973), p. 84.

the Cherokee, 1806, which states that the old Cherokee Chief, Black Fox, should be paid annually \$100 by the United States during his life.¹ A secret agreement or bribe was arranged in 1807 by Agent R.J. Meigs with Black Fox allowing him \$1,000, a rifle, and an annual allowance of \$100 in return for his promise to keep the Indians content.² "From 1801 to 1811 Black Fox was Principal Chief, save for a two year period (1808-10) during which he was "broke" from power because of his leading roll in an unpopular scheme to effect westward movement of the tribe."³ If Black Fox did, in fact, jump into the Spring in 1794, he must have found a way to keep his nose out of water until dark or until the soldiers had gone away. The pool around the spring is large, perhaps covering almost a half acre and containing many reeds, cattails, and a great amount of water cress. Black Fox could have hidden himself beneath the water cress or among the cattails and breathed through a reed.

The area around Black Fox Spring was probably used for the last time as an Indian campground in 1839. From October 1, 1838, until March of 1839, thirteen thousand members of the Cherokee Nation, divided into contingents of one thousand each, traveled westward from the mountains of East Tennessee on their forced and tragic migration to lands west of the Mississippi River.⁴ After crossing the Tennessee River at Hiwassi Island,

¹Kappler, p. 90.

²Brown, p. 453.

³Henry T. Malone, Cherokees of the Old South (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1956), pp. 75, 76.

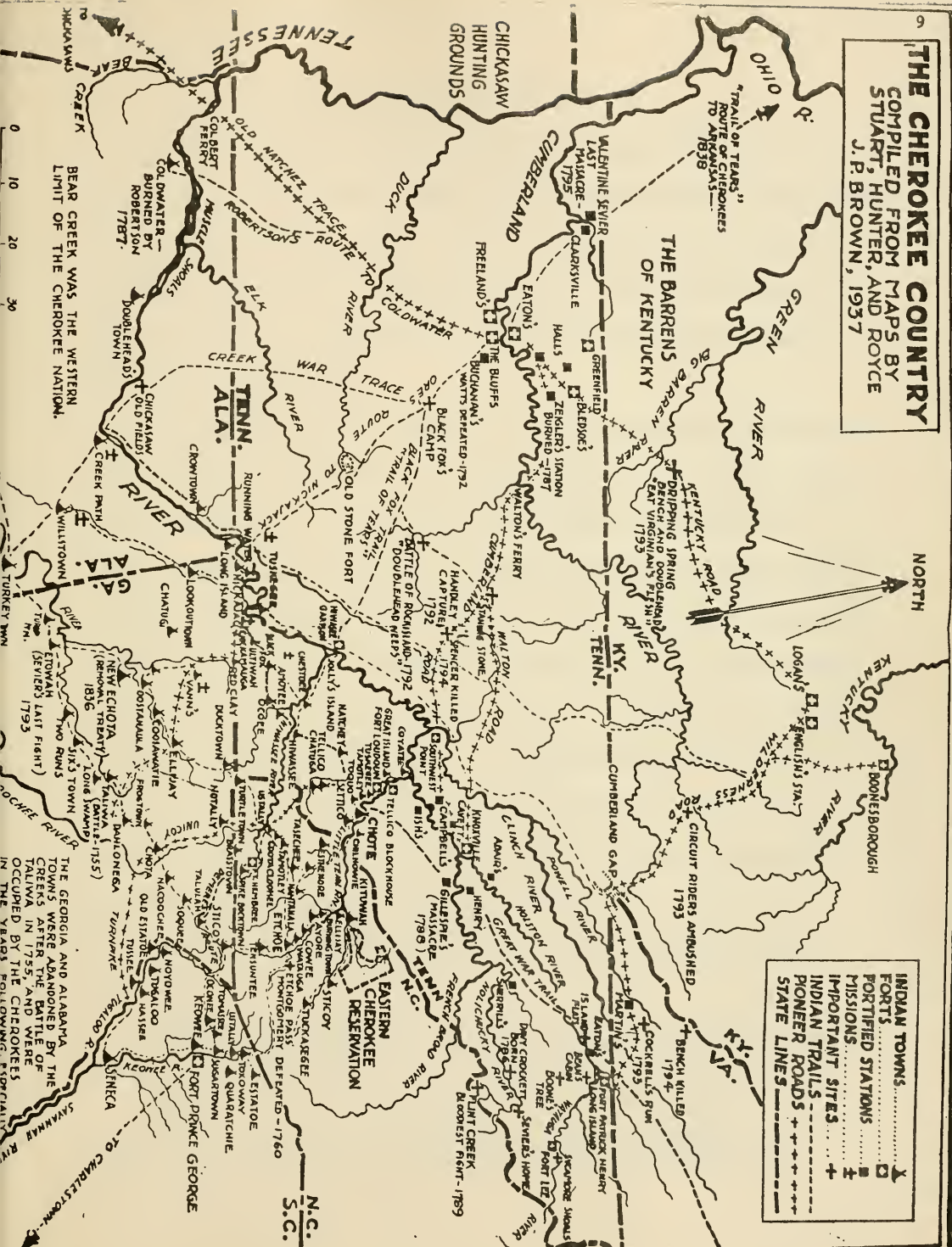
⁴Brown, p. 512..

they followed the old Black Fox Trail, south of Pikeville, through McMinnville and across the Cumberland to Nashville.¹ The "Trail of Tears" passed through the Dilton area as shown on the map on the following page. The Indians traveled an average of ten miles per day, and at the end of each day, each contingent buried its dead.² There is a legend in the community that Indians were buried in the vicinity of the present day Dilton Cemetery. It may be that some of the Cherokees who began the journey but could not finish it were buried in this area. It is known that four thousand Cherokees were left in unmarked graves along the "nunna-da-ul-tsun-yi" or "trail where they cried."³

¹Brown, p. 513.

²Ibid., p. 515.

³Ibid., p. 519.



WILLIAM AND ELIZABETH KELTON

Many families from North Carolina and Virginia began to move into Tennessee in the late 1790's, when the danger of Indian attacks had diminished.¹ They were an aggressive, hardy, liberty-loving people who were mostly Scottish Presbyterians. Outstanding examples of such men and women were the Keltons and Childresses, who were among the early settlers in the Black Fox Spring area.

William and Elizabeth Kelton came to Tennessee from North Carolina, where, according to the 1780 census record, they lived with a large family and numerous slaves.² They lived in Smith County, Tennessee, for a short time before purchasing land in Rutherford County.³ William Kelton purchased 619 acres from Thomas Harris's 2,057 acre grant.⁴ The tract began in the middle of a "blue hole in the Black Fox Spring, to the corner past Hawkins and Cummings property, thence...to a stake in the original corner to Joseph McDowell," etc.⁵ The indenture was made on July 16, 1801, for \$600.⁶ The deed was registered on October 23, 1804, and was acknowledged before Andrew Jackson, at that time one of the judges of the Tennessee Supreme Court of Law and Equity.⁷

The first house in Rutherford County is believed by some to have

¹Goodspeed, p. 811.

²Zella Armstrong (comp.), Notable Southern Families (Chattanooga: Lookout, 1922), p. 215.

³Ibid.

⁴Register's Office, Rutherford County, Tenn.: Deed Book A. p. 30.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Henry G. Wray (comp.), Rutherford County, Tennessee, Deed Abstracts (Smyrna: Henry G. Wray, n.d.), Vol. 1, 1804-1810, p. 7.

been built at Black Fox Spring, but it is not known when or by whom.¹

It is known that on a plantation around the spring, William and Elizabeth Kelton established their family.² Elizabeth Kelton was a charter member of the First Presbyterian Church near Murphy Spring.³ It is said that her four sons went into the woods around the Kelton plantation to hew logs for the building of the church.⁴

On October 25, 1803, Rutherford County was organized by an act of the General Assembly at Knoxville; the first court met at the home of Thomas Rucker on January 3, 1804, in which William Kelton was one of the grand jurymen.⁵ Murfreesboro was founded in 1811, but it was not until November 5, 1813, that elections were ordered to be held at Murfreesboro instead of Black Fox Spring, indicating that much of the county business had been transacted there.⁶

According to Deed Book K, p. 457, the holdings of William Kelton (1753-1813) were divided among his widow and eight living children. A plat of the property made at the time of this division (October 10, 1816) has been reproduced on page 13. The boundary drawn at the top of the page is the eastern boundary, and the one on the right is the southern boundary. Although most of the water goes underground at Black Fox Spring, a branch shown in the plat flows toward the northwest from the spring. Although

¹Sims, p. 19.

⁴Armstrong, p. 217.

²Armstrong, p. 217.

⁵Ibid.

³Sims, p. 195.

⁶Goodspeed., p. 815.

not shown, the Kelton cemetery may be seen today on the farm owned by James Gilley across the Bradyville Road east of the spring. Many of the stones have disappeared or are illegible. As shown in the plat, lots one through nine were bequeathed to the following heirs: Lot 1, Archibald and Agnes Sloan; Lot 2, John and Mary Sloan; Lot 3, Robert Kelton; Lot 4, Samuel Kelton; Lot 5, Elizabeth Kelton, Sr.; Lot 6, James Kelton; Lot 7, Elizabeth Kelton, Jr.; Lot 8, William Kelton; and Lot 9, Alexander and Margaret Lackey.¹

¹Register's Office, Rutherford County, Tennessee, Deed Book K.
p. 457.

of Part.
State of
New York
Hills 18

1882 October 15
July 10, 1884

1793
 1756
 1756

in a month
of ~~(winter)~~
on Swifts again,
presented in 1846.
Hall's beginning
always end that
in Fall-fifth
then Fall-thy

stake, & corner of another tract, then south
and ten poles to a stake, then with mathings
to four poles to a stake, by his fence, then
six and twenty feet poles to a stake

on Bellahel 17th Oct. 1871.



Joel Childress and Joseph Philips Families

Closeness of the Two Families

Some of the members of both the Childress and the Philips families were outstanding citizens and very closely associated. The Joel Childresses were among the first settlers at Black Fox Spring,¹ and Joseph Philips must have lived in the area before going off to war in 1812 since the two men are said to have been friends.² By the time Joseph Philips returned to Tennessee in 1822,³ Joel Childress had died.⁴ In later years, there were marital connections between the two families. Joel Childress' son named John Whitsett was married first to Judge Joseph Philips' niece named Sarah Williams in 1831 and later to his daughter, Mary Elizabeth in 1851. Judge Philips' son, James W., married in 1850 Sarah Rucker, a niece of John W. Childress. The Philips family home, first mentioned in a deed of 1837,⁵ may have been built in the early 1830's. It still stands in the Dilton community today and has been occupied by members of and descendants of both the Philips and Childress families.

Location of Childress Family's First Settlement

Joel and Elizabeth Childress moved from North Carolina to

¹Nashville, Daily American, Oct. 9, 1884, p.5.

²Herbert Weaver (ed.), Correspondence of James K. Polk (Nashville, Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), vol. 1, p.497.

³Robert P. Howard, Illinois: A History of the Prairie State (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), p.117.

⁴County Court Clerk's Office, Rutherford County, Tennessee, Wills and Inventories, Book 4, p.196.

⁵Register's Office, Rutherford County, Tennessee, Deed Book W, p.297.

Tennessee in the 1790's.¹ Deed records reveal that they lived for a few years in Sumner County before purchasing one thousand acres of land for \$1,000 from Benjamin Roberts on August 13, 1803.² This property was in Davidson County until October 25, 1803, when Rutherford County was organized. The deed states that the land was bordered on the west by Sarah Rutledge's grant. A plat of her 2,560 acre grant may be seen in Rutherford County's Deed Record Book K, p. 306. Upon comparing this plat with Joel Childress' indenture with Benjamin Roberts, and after reading deeds of what were probably portions of this one thousand acre tract which were sold by Joel Childress to John Jetton and John Lawrence about a month afterward,³ one might conclude that the Childress property was near Black Fox Spring. When Joel and Elizabeth Childress moved to Rutherford County, they are said to have settled at a place near the spring and on the old road which led in the direction of Manchester and to have kept a store there.⁴ Major John Wood told of a tin cup his mother bought for him at Joel Childress' store near Black Fox Spring when he was four or five years old.⁵ The "old road" referred to by Major John Wood may be seen on Matthew Rhea's 1832 map of Tennessee (page 16). A plat of 567 acres

¹Nashville, Daily American, 10c. cit.

²Register's Office, Davidson County, Tennessee, Deed Book F (Microfilmed by Tennessee State Library and Archives), p. 75.

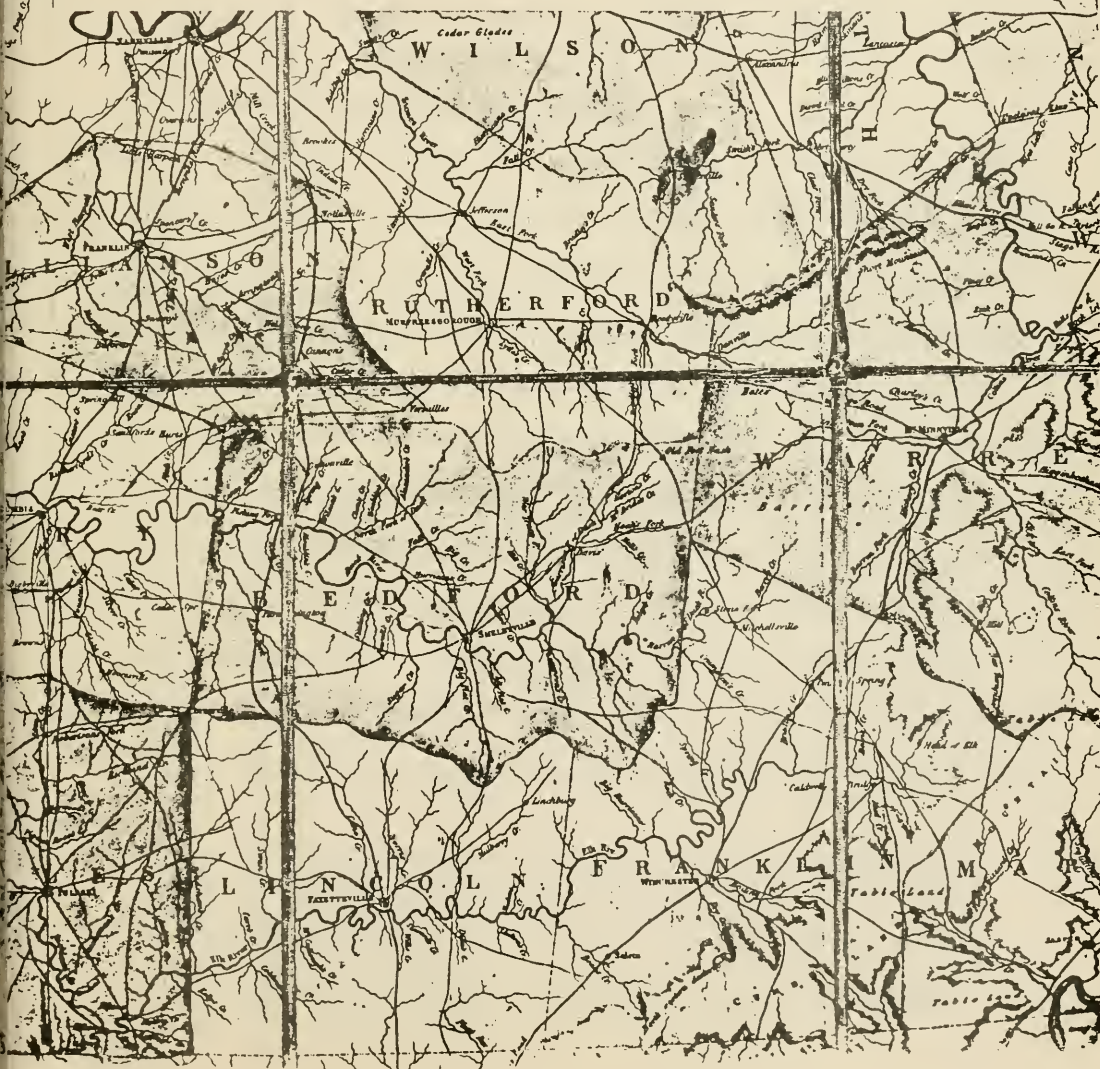
³Register's Office, Rutherford County, Tennessee, Deed Book A, pp. 36, 36; R, p. 302.

⁴Nashville, Daily American, loc. cit.

⁵Ibid.

⁶The old road came by Black Fox Spring, then followed Lytle Creek for several miles before leading off toward Wartrace. It had a foundation of logs in low places along the trail. Evidence of these logs were found by Carl Marlin (1906-1962) around 1956 as he was bulldozing the land about one half mile northeast of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church.

Photocopied from Rhea's 1832 map of Tennessee to show the "old road" which followed Lytle Creek for several miles before leading off toward Wartrace. According to the map's legend, the dot under the words "Lytle Creek" marks the location of a fort. It is also the approximate location of the foundation of a log structure which Ernest Smith pointed out to his grandson, Charles B. Smith. The house had burned by the time the 1878 map was prepared. Ernest Smith said it was a two-story log structure which had been the home of some of the Childresses. It is possible that this was the first home of Joel Childress in Rutherford County.



in this area which belonged to Joel Childress' son, John W. , and possibly to Joel Childress himself, may be seen in Deed Book 27 on page 438. There are no deed records to show how John W. Childress acquired this property. Several deed record books are missing so that one cannot be sure, but it seems probable that he acquired the land from his father or from his older brother, Anderson. A copy of a portion of the Rhea map showing the "old road" is reproduced on the preceding page.

Children of Joel and Elizabeth Childress

The children of Joel and Elizabeth Childress are believed to have lived a few years of their childhood in the Black Fox Camp area. In the 1810 census, we find that the couple had two girls and two boys under ten years of age and owned sixteen slaves.¹ Their children were Anderson, Susan, Sarah, and John Whitsett. Two other children, Benjamin and Elizabeth, died in infancy.² Their daughter Sarah, later the wife of James K. Polk, became the most well known individual to have lived in the community about which this history is written. In speaking of her parents, Sarah said, "At that early day, they had limited advantages for education, but were enterprising and industrious, acquired means and property, and educated their children."³ Their appreciation for books is made evident by the inventory of Joel Childress' property after his death. There

¹U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Census of Population, Rutherford County, Tennessee, 1810 (Washington, D. C. : National Archives, Microfilm Publications) n. pag.

²Jimmie Lou Claxton, Eighty-eight Years With Sarah Polk (New York: Vantage, 1972), p. 11.

³Anson and Fanny Nelson, Memorials of Sarah Childress Polk (New York: Randolph, 1892), p. 2.

were listed the following:

- 1 set of Scott's Family Bibles, 5 vols.
- 1 History of the Late War
- 1 Medical Guide
- 1 Ovid
- 1 Paley's Philosophy
- 1 Simpson's Euclid
- 1 Horace
- 1 Xenophen
- 1 Cicero
- 1 Atlas
- 40 volumes of large and small books assorted
- 6 of Arrowsmith's large maps
- 2 sets of Bigland's View of the World, 5 vols. each¹

Sarah and her sister Susan were taught in the mornings and early afternoons by Daniel Elam at a little log school house in the neighborhood, and in the afternoons, when the exercises of the academy for boys were over for the day, they were given additional lessons by the principal, Mr. Samuel P. Black.² When she was twelve or thirteen, Sarah was sent to Abercrombie Boarding School on the outskirts of Nashville.³ A few years after their arrival in Rutherford County, the Joel Childress family may have moved from the Black Fox Camp area to the town of Murfreesboro.⁴ Prosperous men, active in public affairs, who owned plantations frequently maintained town houses in addition to their plantation houses and lived a part of the year in each. Letters from John W. Childress to James K. Polk in later years reveal that his mother, Mrs. Joel Childress, could never make up her mind whether to live in town or in the country, and she frequently moved from one place to the

¹County Court Clerk's Office, Rutherford County, Tennessee, Wills and Inventories, Book 5, p. 244.

²Nelson, p. 4.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Register's Office, Rutherford County, Tenn., Deed Book L, p. 291.

other.¹ It seems probable that, in 1815, Joel Childress and his family left their first Rutherford County home on the "old road" near the Black Fox Spring for good except for Anderson, who may have lived there with his wife and daughter, Mary, at times prior to his death in 1827; however, the descendants of Joel Childress continued to own property in the Black Fox Camp district and to live on that property from time to time until 1895.²

The Shelbyville Road Plantation

In 1815 Joel Childress bought for \$1,860 from Thomas Smith 186 acres on the West Fork of Stones River bordering the meanderings of the river.³ Mr. Childress purchased thirty additional acres bordering this property in 1817 from Bennett Smith.⁴ He mentions the Stones River plantation in his will,⁵ signed nine days before his death, as being land on which he lived. After his death, the plantation was sold but was purchased again by Joel Childress' son, John W., in 1833.⁶ In a letter of December 8, 1833, to James K. Polk, John W. Childress writes, "Mah and myself have purchased the old plantation and are now moving to it . . ." ⁷ John W. Childress' name appears on the site of the plantation on the Beers map of 1878, and a plat of the property may be seen in Deed Book 27 on page 437.

¹Weaver, vol. 1, pp. 205, 594; vol. 2, pp. 14, 159; vol. 3, p. 444.

²Interview with Mrs. Margaret Dismukes, a great granddaughter of Joel Childress and of Joseph Philips, December, 1975.

³Register's Office, Rutherford County, Tenn., Deed Book K, p. 165.

⁴*Ibid.*, Book L, p. 122.

⁵County Court Clerk's Office, Rutherford County, Tennessee, Wills and Inventories, Book 4, p. 195.

⁶Register's Office, Rutherford County, Tenn., Deed Book W, p. 554.

⁷Weaver, vol. 2, p. 159. "Mah" is Mrs. Joel Childress.

Joel Childress' Public Life

Joel Childress was active in public affairs during his lifetime.

An Act of October 15, 1813, made Joel Childress and six other men commissioners of Murfreesboro.¹ He served as commissioner until 1815, and postmaster of Murfreesboro from 1812 until 1817, and as a director of the Murfreesboro, Tennessee Bank, which was chartered in 1817.² He was a merchant, a tavern keeper, planter, and a large scale land speculator in Alabama during the boom years.³ Samuel McLaughlin, who knew Joel Childress, wrote that he owned and lived in the framed portion of the tavern house on the west side of the square.⁴ In December of 1818, less than a year before his death, Mr. Childress sold a lot on the public square with a dwelling "in which he had lived" to Alpha Kingsley for \$11,000.⁵ It is quite probable that he returned to his Shelbyville Road home in December of 1818 to live there on a continuous basis until his death on August 18, 1819 at 42 years of age.⁶ He was buried in a garden tomb near his house.⁷ In later years his tombstone was installed face down as a hearth in a farm house built on this property. When the house was torn down, the stone was broken into several pieces.⁸ The parts that remain are presently being put together and are to become a part of

¹ Goodspeed, p. 815.

² Ibid., pp. 819, 830.

³ Charles G. Sellers, James K. Polk, Jacksonian, 1795-1843 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 74, 75.

⁴ Henry Wray, "Sojourn in Murfreesboro," Rutherford County Historical Society, Publication No. 1, Summer, 1973, p. 17.

⁵ Register's Office, Rutherford County, Tenn., Deed Book W, p. 246.

⁶ Tombstone of Joel Childress.

⁷ A.L. Childress, "The Childress Family in Tennessee," Tennessee State Library and Archives, Ms. no. 69-316, n. pag.

⁸ Interview with William T. Stephenson, April, 1976.

the muscum village to be known as "Cannonsburgh".¹

Anderson Childress

Ernest Smith (1871-1968) remembered, as a boy, hearing the "old timers" in the community tell of Anderson's death, and he understood this tragic event to have occurred on the Childress farm which was adjacent to his own farm on the west and southwest. He once pointed out to his grandson, Charles B. Smith, the foundation of an old, two-story log house on this farm through which Lytle Creek ran.² The house "where one of the Childress boys lived" had burned down. The farm is known to have belonged to Anderson's younger brother John W. in 1878.³ A plat of the land (567 acres) may be seen in Deed Record Book 27 on page 438 and is possibly a part of the 1,000 acre tract purchased by Joel Childress in 1803 on which he first settled when he came to Rutherford County. In 1827, just seven years after Anderson's marriage to Mary Sansom, Anderson was thrown from his horse, his neck was broken, and the injury was fatal.⁴ This story of a young man, reputed to be an excellent horseman, made so sharp an impression upon Ernest Smith while he was a child that he would never fasten the girth on the saddle when he rode for fear he would hang his toe in the stirrup if the horse threw

¹ From October 17, 1811 to November 15, 1811, Murfreesboro was named Cannonsburgh in honor of ^{*}Newton Cannon, who served as a representative in the state legislature and eventually as governor of Tennessee.

² Interview with Charles B. Smith, January, 1976. The approximate location of the old foundation has been marked with a star on the 1878 map on page 22. All evidence of the old foundation has been swept away by farm machinery.

³ Register's Office, Rutherford County, Tenn., Deed Book 28, p. 508.

⁴ Claxton, p. 32.

Insert: * M. nos Cannon, father of Newton



This map of the Dilton area was photocopied from the Beers Map of Rutherford County of 1878. On it, the name W. S. Childress appears on the home site of his grandfather, Judge Joseph Philips. The house and 946 acres of land, called the "Philips tract" in Deed Book 27 on page 438, belonged in 1878 to his father and mother, John W. and Mary Elizabeth Philips Childress. The star drawn in near the center of the map has been placed there by the author of this history to mark the approximate location of the two-story log house which burned prior to 1878. It stood on Childress property called the "quarter tract" in Deed Book 27, page 438.

him.¹

Joseph Philips' Background

Judge Joseph Philips was a son of Philip Philips, who was in partnership with Michael Campbell, a surveyor and land speculator. Tax records indicate there were 7,000 acres of Philips and Campbell land in Rutherford County in 1811.² That Philip Philips was a man of considerable wealth is attested to by the length of his will,³ which was probated in October of 1797. The farm on which he lived was purchased from William and Ephraim McLean.⁴ A deed of 1791 tells us that William McLean owned land on Knobb Creek north of Duck River.⁵ This would seem to indicate that Philip Philips lived in Bedford County rather than in the Dilton area where his son, Joseph, built his home. In his will Philip Philips bequeathed his farm to his wife, Susannah, and his stills to his eldest son, John. According to the 1820 census, John and his family were living in Bedford County at that time.⁶ Joseph was sixteen at the time of his father's death in 1797. According to court minutes of 1809, Joseph Philips was licensed to practice law in Tennessee during that year.⁷ Although his first acquisition of property was in 1812, when his father's

¹ Interview with Charles B. Smith, January, 1976.

² Rutherford Co., Tenn., Tax Book, 1811 (Microfilmed by the Tennessee State Library and Archives), n. pag.

³ County Court Clerk's Office, Davidson Co., Tenn., Wills and Inventories, Book 2 (Microfilmed by the Tennessee State Library and Archives), p. 89.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Register's Office, Rutherford Co., Tenn., Deed Book C, p. 306.

⁶ U.S. Census of Population, Bedford Co., Tenn., 1820 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, Microfilm Publications), n. pag.

⁷ County Court Clerk's Office, Rutherford Co., Tenn., Court Minutes, Book C, 1808-1810, p. 142. His name appears once as Joseph R. Philips in Book E, 1811-1812 on page 60.

partner and executor deeded 408 acres to him and to his brother, John, on Lytle Creek,¹ he left Tennessee in 1812.² In 1817, he gave his brother-in-law, Robert Purdy, power of attorney to act for him in settling his father's estate and identified himself as Secretary of the Illinois Territory.³

When Joseph Philips left Tennessee to fight in the War of 1812, he became a captain of artillery.⁴ After the war he settled in Randolph County, Illinois, and remained in that state for ten years. He followed Nathaniel Pope as Territorial Secretary of Illinois,⁵ serving from 1816 to 1818,⁶ and, because of his excellent reputation, was appointed Supreme Court Justice of Illinois in 1818.⁷ In 1822, he resigned as Supreme Court Justice to become a candidate for governor of Illinois, but he lost the election because of his pro-slavery stand.⁸ His first wife, Elouise Morrison,⁹ died about this time, and he returned to Tennessee in 1822 at 38 years of age.¹⁰ On September 6, 1825, he married his second wife, Dorothy Drake Sumner, in Davidson County.¹¹ They made their home in Nashville at least until 1830; during these years, Judge Philips served

¹ Register's Office, Rutherford Co., Tenn., Deed Book K, p. 75.

² Sims, p. 75.

³ Register's Office, Rutherford Co., Tenn., Deed Book M, p. 348.

⁴ Sims, p. 75.

⁵ Robert P. Howard, Illinois: A History of the Prairie State (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), p. 117.

⁶ John Clayton, The Illinois Fact Book and Historical Almanac, 1673-1968 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970), p. 97.

⁷ Howard, p. 117.

⁸ Theodore C. Pease, The Story of Illinois (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 77.

⁹ Letter to Mrs. Selene Woodson from Miss Philippa Gilchrist, Jan. 8, 1963.

¹⁰ Clayton, p. 97, see also U. S. Census of Population, Rutherford Co., Tenn., 1850, which gives his age in that year as 66.

¹¹ Davidson County Marriage Record Book I, 1789-1837 (Nashville, French Lick Chapter, D. A. R., 1952), p. 90.

as president of the People's Bank.¹

Joseph Philip's Return to Rutherford County

Prior to 1830 Joseph Philips acquired many acres of land in Rutherford County as an inheritance from his father.² No mention is made in deed records of a house on any of the land which he acquired, but this does not preclude the possibility that there was one. The 1830 census³ shows the Philipses to be in Davidson County during that year, but sometime between 1830 and 1837, they moved to Rutherford County, and it could have been during this time that the Philips house was built near the "old road." The two story house was constructed in the architectural style of country houses built in the early years of the nineteenth century. A deed of 1837 transfers from Robert Bates to Joseph Philips and his stepson, John H. Sumner, "fifty acres of land beginning at a hickory on the south boundary of the tract on which Joseph Philips now resides, it being the northwest corner of land on which Robert Bates resides which he purchased from John Fulks."⁴

After John Sumner's death, his half-brother, James W. Philips, deeded his one third interest in the Sumner estate to his father, Joseph Philips, who deeded it to his daughters, Mary Elizabeth (Mrs. John W. Childress) and Ellen Philips Gilchrist. Judge Philips then deeded his

¹ "Genealogical Data. Battle, Childress, Maney, Robertson, Rucker and Williams Families." Tennessee State Library and Archives, Ms.1102.

² Register's Office, Rutherford Co., Tenn., Deed Book O, pp.263, 267.

³ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Census of Population, Davidson Co., Tenn., 1820 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, Microfilm Publications) n. pag.

⁴ Register's Office, Rutherford Co., Tenn., Deed Book W, p.291.

own farm and twenty-three of his slaves to his son, James, subject to this reservation: "Joseph Philips reserves to himself and his wife, Dorothy, the exclusive right of possession, use and enjoyment of the dwelling house, out-houses, fixtures and garden and of so much of such part or parts of the land as they or either of them or the survivor may choose to occupy . . . for and during the time of their natural lives."¹ Judge Philips must have planned to retire from farming in 1850 when this land and these slaves were deeded to his son, James, who married in that year a neice of Sarah Childress Polk, Sarah Rucker. Sarah Rucker Philips and her child died two years later when the child was born² and James W. Philips died in 1854³ at age twenty-eight.

The 1850 Census reveals that Judge Philips was one of the wealthiest farmers in the county, with property valued at \$33,000 and fifty-five slaves.⁴ Ernest Smith remembered hearing people in Dilton say that Judge Philips "used to go down the road every day, rain or shine, in his fancy, four wheel surrey," and he recalled seeing the old surrey in a dilapidated condition as it sat in the yard of the Philips' homeplace in later years. Judge Philips died in 1857 at seventy-three years of age.⁵ A plat of the "Joseph Philips

¹ Register's Office, Rutherford Co., Tenn., Deed Book 5, p. 627.

² Claxton, p. 141, 143.

³ Register's Office, Rutherford Co., Tenn., Deed Book 23, p. 583.

⁴ Census of Rutherford County, Tennessee, 1850 (Nashville: Deane Porch, 1967), pp. 355, 356.

⁵ County Court Clerk's Office, Rutherford Co., Tenn., no. 19, pp. 78, 186.

tract" may be seen in Deed Book 27, page 438, and an inventory of his estate may be found in Book 19, page 186, in the County Court Clerk's office.

John W. Childress, Son of Joel Childress and Son-In-Law of Joseph Philips

Letters from John W. Childress to James K. Polk reveal that he had a difficult time financially during the 1830's,¹ but by 1850, census records indicate that his real estate was valued at \$28,000 and that he owned 49 slaves.² When he brought his family from from Griffin, Georgia after the Civil War, his own home had been destroyed.³ After serving for a few years as Circuit Judge in Nashville, Mr. Childress probably returned to Murfreesboro to live in the early 1870's, when he began serving as president of the branch of the Planter's Bank of Tennessee at Murfreesboro; from 1872 to 1880, he served as president of the First National Bank established here.⁴ He and his wife, Mary Elizabeth, are believed to have lived with his widowed mother-in-law, Dorothy Sumner Philips, at the Philips home some time between 1870 and 1875, and Mr. Childress continued to use the land for agricultural purposes until his death. Ernest Smith, born in 1871, remembered that when he was a child, John W. Childress and his family lived at the Philips house. He recalled seeing John W. Childress, who was known

¹ Weaver, v. 2, p.14.

² Census of Rutherford County, Tennessee, 1850 (Nashville: Deane Porch, 1967), p. 361.

³ Claxton, p.157.

⁴ Nashville, Daily American, loc. cit.

as Major Childress, ride to and from Murfreesboro every day on his horse, and he told of visiting him at the Philips home with his father, Alexander T. Smith. He also told his grandchildren that he watched with his father and Major Childress as a hired man attempted and failed to ride a horse which had not been broken in. When John and Mary Elizabeth moved to their home on the corner of Lytle and Academy Streets around 1875, their son, W. S. Childress and his family moved into the Philips house.¹

A deed of 1878 states that the homeplace "is now and has been for years in the use and possession of Mrs. Dorothy Philips."² Deed records and tax records reveal that she also owned a house and lot in Murfreesboro from 1873 until her death.³ It is probable that she lived alternately in her country house and town house during these latter years of her life. Rutherford County tax records indicate that she was still alive in 1881,⁴ at which time she would have been ninety-two years old.⁵

During 1878 John W. Childress paid \$4,000 to Joseph Philips Gilchrist of Alabama for his interest in the Philips property.⁶ The property was bordered on the north by land already owned by John, and by properties owned by Dr. Robert N. Knox and by Jasper Knox. The

¹ Beers Map of Rutherford County, 1878.

² Register's Office, Rutherford Co., Tenn., Deed Book 23, p. 583.

³ *Ibid.*, Book 21, p. 369.

⁴ Rutherford Co., Tenn., Tax Records (Microfilmed by Tennessee State Library and Archives, 1965), n. pag.

⁵ Census of Rutherford County, Tennessee, 1850 (Nashville: Deane Porch, 1967), p. 355.

⁶ Register's Office, Rutherford Co., Tenn., Deed Book 23, p. 583.

Knox properties lay to the east of the property already owned by John W. Childress as did property of H. W. Bivins and A. T. Smith. The Childress tract of 567 acres and the Philips tract of 946 acres may be seen in plats in Deed Book 27, page 438. Joseph Philips Gilchrist was a grandson of Judge Joseph Philips and the child of Ellen Philips Gilchrist. When Mrs. Gilchrist died, the remaining heirs of the Philips property were the Judge's widow, Dorothy, one daughter (Mary Elizabeth Childress) and her family, and Mrs. Gilchrist's son.

The Philips House and Homeplace

The following description of the Philips house and outhouses was given to the writer orally by Charles B. Smith, a grandson of Ernest L. Smith. Charles and Ann Smith and their daughter, Virginia Lynn, lived in the home from 1962 to 1970 and, with the financial backing of the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Cannon Overall, they restored the interior of the old house to some degree of its former beauty, as Robert N. Justice had done in 1906.¹ The house was badly in need of repair in 1962. It had been used for grain storage and by coon hunters on weekends. There were times when it had been occupied by only snakes, lizards, and rats. The upstairs bedroom on the north side has a large blood stain on the floor which the sanding machine was unable to remove. The blood may

¹ Interview with Charles B. Smith, January, 1976.

have been that of a soldier, since the home was used as a hospital by the Union soldiers during the Civil War.¹ Its use as a hospital may have accounted for its survival of the war.

The house was built of virgin cedar logs, eighteen feet long. The butt ends, twenty-four inches in diameter, were hewed down to six inches wide. Split hickory laths hold the plaster on the interior walls. The plaster was made of lime, oyster shell, and hog hair. The hog hair was for bonding. The exterior is covered with hand hewn cedar weatherboarding and the floor joists are of round cedar logs up to twelve inches in diameter. The floor is one and a half inch thick yellow ash, tongue and groove boards, six inches wide. All the ceilings are yellow poplar, hand-planed boards. The rooms are seventeen feet by seventeen feet and the ceilings are about eight and a half feet high except for the back part of the house where they are nine and a half feet high. The floor of the upstairs bedroom on the south side is of yellow poplar and the room contains no fireplace. Since evidence of a brick kiln was found by Ernest Smith near the house, it is probable that the bricks for the chimney and the front walk were made on the premises.²

The doors to the house are sturdy with extremely large iron

¹Interview with Mrs. Cannon J. Overall, March, 1976.

²Interview with Charles B. Smith, January, 1976.

keyholes and keys, and the front doors are double panel doors made of yellow poplar. The house, facing the west, has a one story front porch, which leads into a lower entrance hallway with a stairway leading to the upper hall. There is a large room on each side of each hall on both floors. The east porch originally went across the entire house on the east side; however, today, behind the southwest downstairs room, the porch is enclosed as another hall opening onto the south porch. A steep indoor stairway, which has now been torn away, led to the upstairs attic over the two back rooms. Four of the sons of the John Nelson family, who rented the farm during the 1880's, slept in this attic, but there was room enough for twenty people to have bunked in the large attic.¹

The privy was unusually nice with a copper latrine. The old log kitchen, just south of the south porch, was torn down in 1963. Above the kitchen and pantry were servants' quarters paneled with yellow poplar paneling. The log carriage house and the log barn may still be seen on the property. Not far from the barn is a dug well. At one time, there were nine slave cabins on the property. The Beers map shows that the road which ran past the house was near the front of the house in 1878. A sunken brick walk led from the front steps of the house to the old road.²

During the early 1960's, two artifacts were found near the house.

¹ Interview with Charles B. Smith, January, 1976.

² Ibid.

moved to Murfreesboro.¹ The homelace, including 75 1/2 acres and the house, became the property of Mrs. Edgar Smith in 1900 when the property (947 acres) was divided among the heirs of Mary Elizabeth Philips Childress. A plat may be seen with the deed.² In 1906, it was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Robert N. Justice.³ In her widowhood, Mrs. Justice (formerly Lizzie Overall) married Mr. Sam Paschal. In 1945, the property was sold by Mrs. Paschal's heirs to his deceased wife's nephew Cannon J. Overall and his wife, Mary Virginia Bock Overall.⁴ Mrs. Overall is the owner at the present time (1976).⁵

The house is now occupied by Gari Webb, a local artist, whose sketch of it appears with this article. A window in the end of the house to the right side of the south chimney is not shown in the sketch, but possibly was not there originally. A window, which is not actually there, is shown in the sketch by the door to the enclosed south hall, but the hall was not enclosed originally. The house had window shutters on the outside, which were removed due to their deteriorated condition. With this information, the sketch, and some imagination, the reader may "see" the house as it may have appeared during the 1830's and 1840's when it is believed to have been visited by the president and first lady of the land, President and Mrs. James K. Polk.⁶

¹ Interview with Mrs. Margaret Dismukes, December, 1976.

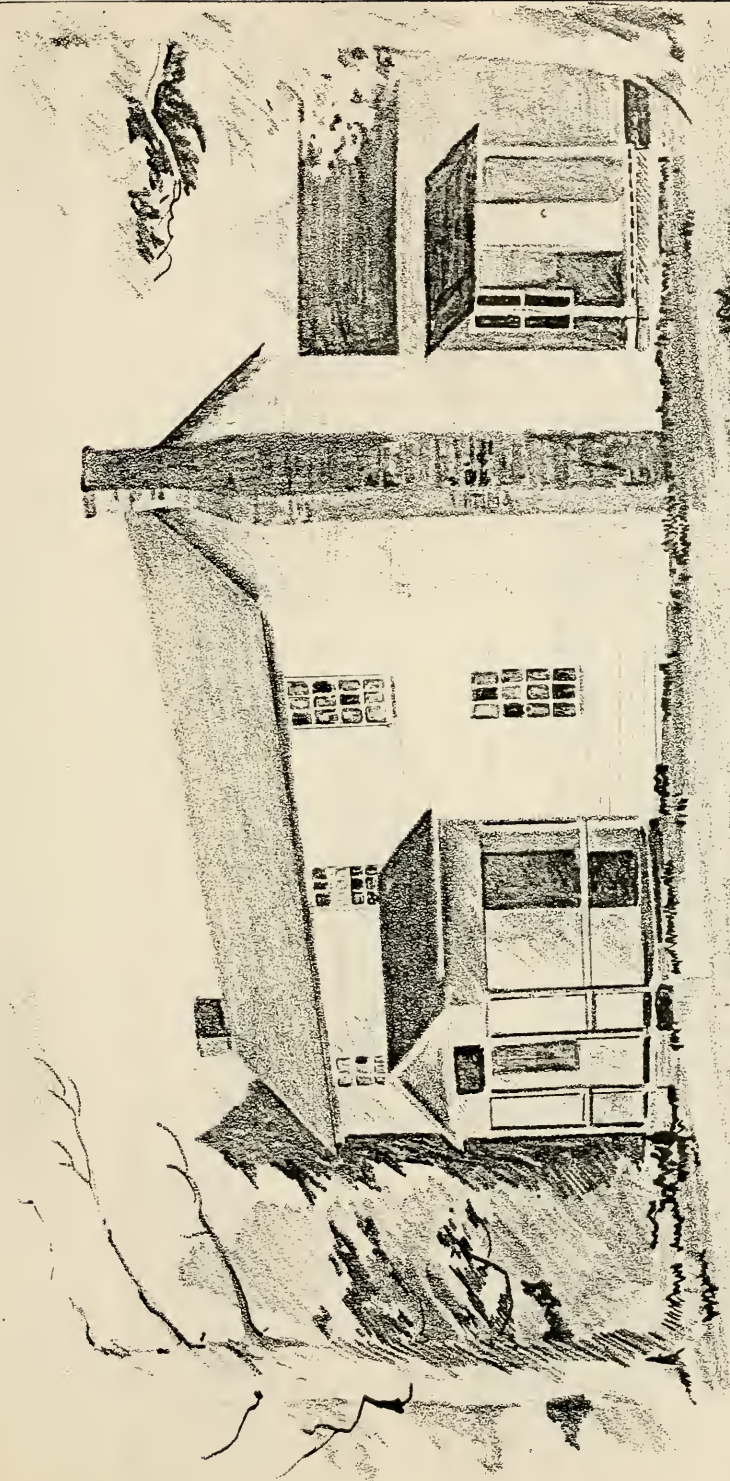
² Register's Office, Rutherford Co., Tenn., Deed Book 41, p. 5.

³ Interview with Mrs. Margaret Dismukes, December, 1976.

⁴ Interview with Mrs. Jean Overall Thompson, July, 1976.

⁵ Register's Office, Rutherford Co., Tenn., Deed Book 95, p. 135.

⁶ Interview with Mrs. Pearl Marlin Smith, July, 1976. Mrs. Smith was told this around 1910 by older residents of the Dilton community.



C. WEBB

1888

CHILDRESS/PHILIPS GENEALOGY

Joel Childress (1777-1819)
m. Elizabeth Whiteett (1780-1863)

Anderson Childress (1799-1827)
m. 1820, Mary Wills Sansom

Susan Childress (1802-1888) Sarah Childress (1803-1891)
m. 1820, Dr. William Rucker m. 1822, Pres. Jas. K. Polk

John W. Childress (1806-1884)
m. 1831, Sarah Williams,
(niece of Joseph Phillips)
m. 1851, Mary Eliz. Phillips
(daughter of Joseph and
Dorothy Phillips)

Joseph Phillips (1784-1857)
m. Elouise Morrison (-ca. 1822)
m. 1825, Dorothy Drake Sumner (1789-1881)

James W. Phillips (1826-1854)
m. 1850, Sarah Rucker,
(dct. of Susan Childress
Rucker)

Mary Eliz. Phillips (1829-1900)
m. 1851, John W. Childress,
(son of Joel and Elizabeth
Childress)

Ellen A. Phillips (1834-1859)
m. 1851, Philip P. Glitchrist

John H. Sumner (-1837)
(son of Dorothy Phillips
by her first husband,
John Sumner)

OTHER EARLY SETTLERS

In addition to Philip Philips and Michael Campbell, there were others who received land grants in the area to become known as Dilton. Some of these men were Archibald Lytle,¹ Thomas Yeardley (E, 421), Henry Winburn (D, 333), Howell Tatum and Henry Wiggin (C, 296), Thomas Love as assignee of Giles Brooks (B, 118), and Thomas Harris (A, 30). Lytle Creek, a branch of the West Fork of Stones River, is believed to have been named for Archibald Lytle who, in 1786, received 7,200 acres through which the creek ran.

Some of the men who purchased land in the Black Fox Spring area between 1803 and 1810 were William Kelton (A, 30), Joel Childress,² Zebulon Jetton (H, 305), James Wilson (F, 493), Isaac Jetton (S, 185; H, 305), John Jetton (A, 36), John Lawrence (A, 35), David Fleming (F, 494), James Montgomery (B, 96), John Cummings (A, 30), James Hawkins (A, 29), James Conway (B, 70), Hugh Montgomery (B, 139), John Kirk (B, 117), Andrew Miller (E, 434), Thomas Yeardley (E, 421), and Joseph Marlin (L, 525).³

Census records for 1850 and deed records disclose other land owners in the community during the years prior to the Civil War. Some of these were John Lawrence, James Wilson, Bennett Smith, James Neely, Robert Bates, John Fulks, Joseph Philips, John W. Childress, William D. Nelson, John Fleming, William Kelton, James Kelton, Daniel Maberry, John Kirk,

¹ Betty G. Cartwright (comp.), North Carolina Land Grants in Tennessee, 1778-1791 (Memphis: Nortex, 1958), p. 81, see also Rutherford County, Deed Book D, p. 33.

² Register's Office, Davidson Co., Tenn., Deed Book F, p. 75.

³ Register's Office, Rutherford Co., Tenn., Deed Books with page numbers have been placed in parentheses by the names of the grantees.

Hugh Kirk, Samuel H. Hodge, William M. Moore, and Samuel, John and William Bellah.¹ The Bellah Cemetery, one half mile southwest of Black Fox Spring, is one of the oldest cemeteries in Rutherford County.²

Hugh Kirk, Sr., owned the farm on the west side of Isaac Jetton's farm and north of Roy E. Tarwater's farm.³ Several years ago, Hugh Kirk, Jr. recalled for Mr. Tarwater that his father had an apple orchard extending from one end of his farm to the other along the edge of the Bradyville Pike. Each year Mr. Kirk took a wagon load of apples to a still in Bradyville to have them processed into a barrel of apple brandy.⁴ A plat in Deed Book S, page 185, reveals the location of land owned by John Lawrence and Isaac Jetton in relation to that known to have been owned by Hugh Kirk. Isaac Jetton's home seems to have been located across the road from the Dilton Store and about one fourth to one half mile to the northwest. The house burned in 1863 during the Civil War and Isaac Jetton died in the following year.⁵ Among his many descendants is Mrs. Clarence Rogers (nee "Totsie" Overall) who still owns some of the property which once belonged to the Jettons and Overalls. Mrs. Rogers' grandmother was Mary Louise Jetton Overall, a granddaughter of Isaac Jetton.⁶

¹ Census of Rutherford County, 1850 (Nashville: Deane Porch, 1967).

² Rutherford County, Tennessee Cemeteries (Murfreesboro: Rutherford County Historical Society, 1975) vol. 2, pp. 4, 5.

³ Register's Office, Ruth. Co., Tenn., Deed Book S, p. 185.

⁴ Interview with Roy E. Tarwater, December, 1975.

⁵ Register's Office, Ruth. Co., Tenn., Deed Book 14, p. 563.

(That the Dilton area had a significant role during the Civil War is also attested to by Mrs. Clemmie Ring who recalls that the property presently owned by Mrs. B. F. Todd was known as "The Quarter" during the late 1800's. A quarter master depot where Confederate soldiers picked up supplies was located at this place just six-tenths of a mile to the north of Black Fox Spring.)

⁶ Interview with Mrs. Clarence Rogers, January, 1976.

According to Mrs. Robert M. Sanders, William McAllister Moore came to Dilton from Virginia in 1859 and settled on a hill about a mile to the east of the Dilton Store of today. A daughter named Mary was born to William and Margaret Nesbett Moore as they made their journey to Tennessee by covered wagon. When Mary grew up, she married William Knox.¹ Their daughter, Margaret Lee, and her husband, Robert M. Sanders, live near the Leanna community today. The hill on which Mrs. Sanders' grandfather settled was named for him. Those who have walked to the top of Moore Hill have been rewarded with a splendid, pastoral view of the Dilton countryside.

OUTSTANDING POST CIVIL WAR FAMILIES

Two men known to have lived in the Dilton area in the post Civil War years who have brief biographical sketches in the Goodspeed Histories are Dr. Robert N. Knox and John A. Gilley. According to Goodspeed, Dr. Knox, born in 1846, was a Baptist, a democrat, and a Civil War veteran; he was a physician as well as a farmer, and a member of the Rutherford County Medical Society, who had articles published in the Nashville Journal of Medicine and Surgery.² Two children, Sallie and William, were born to Dr. and Mrs. Knox (nee Lucy Catherine Fox).³

¹ Interview with Mrs. Robert M. Sanders, January, 1976.

² Goodspeed, p. 817.

³ Ibid., p. 1046.

Goodspeed records the following facts about John A. Gilley (1843-1917): After a period of service in the Civil War which culminated in his capture and imprisonment for two months, Mr. Gilley was released. In 1878, he moved his family from Big Springs to the Dilton community. Four sons (Ephraim D., John F., Jessie P., and Arthur T.) were born to John and Nancy McCrary Gilley.¹ Their names may be seen on the 1915 map of Rutherford County, the Dilton portion of which has been reproduced and included with this history. William A. Gilley, son of Ephraim, and James W. Gilley, son of Jesse, live at Dilton today on land inherited from their fathers.

A biographical sketch of Reuben C. Harrell has been written by his great grandson Raymond B. Harrell. Harrell is spelled as "Heared" on the 1878 map. According to the author of the sketch, the name Harrell has been spelled and pronounced many different ways over the years. Raymond Harrell's sketch supplied vivid details about a man of integrity whose word was as good as his bond. The following information is paraphrased from his sketch.

Having once been denied credit at a store when a young man, Reuben Harrell resolved never to charge anything again, but rather to pay cash at the time of purchase. Because of his extraordinary thriftiness, his astuteness as a trader, and his willingness to work hard, he had no trouble keeping this resolution. His "bank" was an old pair of overalls with a knot tied in one leg to keep his money from falling through, and his "purse"

¹ Ibid., p.1036.

was his boot. Periodically, he took the money he had accumulated to the bank, not for deposit, but to exchange it into bills of large denominations. When he had accumulated enough money, he would buy a farm and pay cash for it, which he pulled from one of his boots. Mr. Harrell, known as "Greenback Rube", continued in this fashion until he had purchased a large number of farms between Bradyville and Murfreesboro. His name appears many times in the indexes to the deed records. Reuben Harrell had seven children, for whom he provided educational opportunities which he had lacked. Their names were James N., Thomas, John Wesley, Elisha M., Lorenzo Dow, William L. and Matilda.¹

Elisha Monroe Harrell, well educated for his time, became a successful Methodist minister. The house which he inherited from his father was originally the home of Captain Ed Arnold, one of Nathan Bedford Forrest's officers, and is described in Hearthstones,² as is the home which was owned by Lorenzo Dow Harrell, later known as Bellwood.³ Reuben and Catherine Hastings Harrell were buried in a vault in the Harrell Cemetery located on the farm at Dilton⁴ on which Mr. Harrell lived until his death in 1899 at seventy-two years of age.

Mr. and Mrs. William Henderson (nee Fannie Bell Jarman) lived for many years as well-known and respected members of the Dilton

¹ Raymond B. Harrell, "The Harrell Generations" (Mss., n.d.) n. pag.

² Mary B. Hughes, Hearthstones (Murfreesboro: Mid South, 1942), p. 11. ³Ibid., p. 12.

⁴ Rutherford County, Tenn. Cemeteries (Murfreesboro: Rutherford Co. Historical Society, 1975), vol. 2, pp. 81, 82. The Harrell Cemetery is Cemetery no. 93 on the map of the Dilton Quadrangle in this volume.

community. Their daughter, Mrs. Ianthia Ross, has provided the following information about her father.¹ Born into slavery in 1862, William Henderson lived almost the entirety of his ninety-two years as a free man. After the slaves were freed, his grandmother and her husband purchased a small farm at Dilton, which at the grandmother's death, became Mr. Henderson's. Later, he purchased additional land, all of which is still owned by his daughter, Mrs. Ross, who lives in Nashville, Tennessee. In addition to his farming activity, Mr. Henderson was a blacksmith who could design anything out of iron or wood. He worked as a barber and as a cobbler. Having learned to make medicine and liniment, he was often called upon by his neighbors to lance a boil or to administer medical aid to a person or an animal. After planting a garden for his family, Mr. Henderson planted another for anyone in the neighborhood who needed vegetables. He once gave one of the last two sides of meat in his smoke-house to a man who was in need. A minister for sixty-two years, he preached for a number of churches, including Prosperity Baptist Church at Dilton and Mt. Zion in Murfreesboro. Mr. Henderson was a self-educated man with a library composed of an eight-volume set of Shakespeare, a lot of leather bound encyclopedias, many books about the Bible, books about the presidents and books of poetry. He never sat down without a book in his hand and a stack of books beside his chair. Appreciative of his opportunity to vote, he only missed voting once in his life and that

¹ Letter from Mrs. Ianthia Henderson Ross, April 7, 1976.

was due to an illness which confined him to the hospital.¹ Those in the community who knew William Henderson remember him as a large, strong man with a good mind and a generous heart, who practiced the Bible principles he preached.²

When a post office was established at Dr. James Madison Dill's store in 1887, the community officially acquired the name of Dillon.³ Dr. Dill and his first wife, Jestina Kelton (a descendant of William and Elizabeth Kelton⁴) had lived in Carlocksville, a community south of Dillon which may be seen on the 1878 map of Rutherford County. Jestina Dill died in 1880; in 1883, Dr. Dill moved into the community which was destined to be named for him and married Mary Catherine Hill, the daughter of James and Olivia Hutchinson Hill.⁵

Mary Hill Dill was known not only for her talkativeness and outspoken manner, but also for her charitable nature, and for her excellent knowledge of the Bible. Her grandson, Raymond Harrell, remembers her best as a tall, thin, white-haired woman sitting by the fireside with a Bible in hand, smoking her pipe and telling Bible or family stories to her grandchildren.⁶

Dr. Dill, who had a lovable and humble disposition, was willing to serve anyone in the community regardless of his ability or inability to

¹ Letter from Mrs. Ianthia Henderson Ross, April 7, 1976.

² Interview with William Hoyt Smith, April, 1976.

³ Raymond B. Harrell, "The Dill Family" (Mss., n. d.), n. pag.

⁴ Armstrong, p. 228.

⁵ Raymond B. Harrell, "The Dill Family" (Mss., n. d.), n. pag.

⁶ Ibid.

pay for those services. He is said to have been a friend to everybody but himself. Jack R. Mankin, in his autobiography, writes, "Papa said he went into his store one day to buy two spools of thread but Dr. Dill only had two, so he said "John, I can't sell you but one of them because someone else might come along and want the other one."¹ Even so, his work as storekeeper and postmaster was probably necessary to his financial survival because he never sent anyone a bill. When he was paid for administering medical aid, it was often with farm produce. Dr. Dill received his medical training from the University of Nashville Medical School. He is listed in the school's catalog of students in 1856 and 1857. Some of the later catalogs are missing, making it impossible to determine the year of his graduation.² He was a member of the Rutherford County Medical Society and was a democrat.³

Dr. Dill and his wife, Mary, are credited with having founded the Dilton Church of Christ, which met in their home until it acquired a building in 1894.⁴ Their home was situated on property indicated on the Beers map of 1878 as owned by J. W. Jacobs. Those who remember visiting the Dill home describe it as a six-room log structure with an upstairs bedroom and an enclosed back porch, which was used as a bedroom. A

¹ Jack R. Mankin, "Autobiography" (Ms., n.d.), p.155.

² Raymond B. Harrell, "The Dill Family" (Mss., n.d.), n. pag.

³ Goodspeed, p.1031.

⁴ Register's Office, Rutherford Co., Tenn., Deed Book 35, p.517.

guest bedroom was maintained for use by the preachers who came and went.¹

On June 23, 1916, Dr. Dill died at the age of eighty-four. He was survived by his wife, Mary; their children, Kate, Annie, and Scobey; and one son, Joseph, by his first wife. Mrs. Dill died in 1928 as a result of injury incurred from smoke inhalation when her home burned in 1927.² Her widowed daughter, Annie (Mrs. Oscar Harrell) and Mrs. Harrell's children were living with her at the time of the fire. A new house was built by the people of Dilton for this family. It was a small contribution in comparison to all that Dr. and Mrs. J. M. Dill had done for the community.³

In the late 1870's, three brothers named J. Philip (1833-1904), A. Jackson (1838-1913), and Benton P. Mankin (1843-1921) moved into the Dilton area. Philip and his wife, Jane Robinson (1836-1901), had two sons, John Benton and Welcom Hodge. Their homeplace was situated just southwest of the point where Dilton-Mankin Lane today crosses Lytle Creek. Jackson Mankin settled across the road from Philip. He and his wife, Fannie Miller (1838-88), had three children: Oscar, Horace, and Irene. Oscar was for many years a magistrate on the county court and was known

¹ Interview with William Hoyt Smith, March, 1976.

² Raymond B. Harrell, "The Dill Family" (Mss., n. d.), n. pag.

³ Interview with William Hoyt Smith, March, 1976. The house is presently owned by the Dill's granddaughter, Mrs. Houston Brown (nee Mary Catherine Harrell).

as "Square" Mankin not out of disrespect but because of local custom.¹ Benton P. Mankin settled on the east side of the Manchester Pike about two and one-half miles south of Murfreesboro. He and his first wife, Alice F. Hearn (1853-1882), had two daughters, Mardilla H. and Mary L.² By his second wife, Sally Atkinson (1851-1935) he had one daughter, Jessie, who died early.³ All three brothers were veterans of the Confederate army and are believed to have fought in the battle of Murfreesboro.⁴ There were so many Mankins in the community by 1900 that the little hamlet which grew up at the intersection of the Manchester Road and the lane which led to Dilton became known as Mankinville.⁵

¹ The title "Square" is derived from the Middle English title Squire or Esquire sometimes applied to certain public officials in the United States such as magistrates.

² Mary L. Mankin became the wife of A. T. Gilley of the Dilton Community.

³ Goodspeed, p.1049.

⁴ Interview with Jack R. Mankin, August, 1976.

⁵ Interview with Mr. Mankin, August, 1976. Mr. J. R. Mankin is a son of John Benton and Octavia Hendricks Mankin, and grandson of J. Philip and Jane Robinson Mankin all of whom lived in the Dilton community for various periods of time. His great grandparents were John (1798-1883) and Elizabeth Hodge Mankin (1800-1878), who came to Tennessee from North Carolina and settled in the Big Springs community a few miles south of Dilton. John and Elizabeth Mankin were the parents of eleven children who lived to adulthood.

FOLKLORE AND FOLK MEDICINE

Dr. Dill was a trusted friend and physician to the community, but the people had confidence in their home remedies as well. Joe Jernigan, who lived at Dilton in the late 1800's and early 1900's remembers that asafetida, coal oil and sugar and sassafras were frequently used for medicinal purposes. Asafetida bags were put on strings and placed around the necks of children to ward off colds and fevers. It had a strong and unpleasant odor, which could keep all children at a distance, including those with colds or fever. This may have been the reason for its effectiveness. Coal oil and sugar was the medicine used for croup both externally and internally, and a mixture of turpentine and lard was applied to the chest of children with bronchial colds. Sassafras tea was made from the dried bark of roots of the sassafras tree which were boiled in water. This was a favorite of the people who believed it would help them stay well.¹ In the decade between 1910 and 1920, a child was believed to have "caught" pellagra by eating too much corn bread.² In Joel Childress' time, there were "bleeders" in the community who were called to the home of an ailing person to draw blood from him. Major Woods said that the tin cup which his mother had bought for him at Joel Childress' store was put to use as a receptacle for the blood drawn off from those in the family who were sick; this, he said, separated him from his cup.³

When the children of Dow Harrell misbehaved, it did not take long for "Aunt Jo" to bring them back into line. Mrs. Annie Harrell Smith knew

¹ Interview with Mr. Joe J. Jernigan, December, 1975.

² Letter from Jack R. Mankin, January 12, 1976.

³ Nashville, Daily American, October 9, 1884, p.5.

about this from her own experience as a child. When Annie and her sister Clemmie were young children, their mother died. Mrs. Jo Lasseter, housekeeper for the Harrells, was given the added duty of caring for them. When Annie and Clemmie were bad children, they were told that "old bloody head and raw bones" would get them if they didn't behave. This prospect sent shivers down their spines and they instantly reformed their behavior.¹ They were told that this sinister creature lurked about near the apple barrell in a dark hallway.² It may be that some children in the community were frightened during the Civil War by soldiers who had bloody heads and raw bones; hence its use later to scare children into good behavior and to make the apples last longer!

A small pox epidemic in the 1890's caused terrible misery for many and even death for a few people in the community,³ but there is a legend that it did one man some good. One of the community's prominent citizens who lived no more than a mile from the present Dilton store had a son who was the "black sheep" of the family. At the time of the small pox epidemic, the young man was said to be in jail, which was his frequent habitat. Some said he died in jail of this dreaded disease, but others believed he was "buried out of jail." On the day he was buried, the father rode his mule ahead of the son's casket, which rested on a horse drawn cart, and warned the people

¹ Interview with Charles B. Smith, grandson of Ernest and Annie Harrell Smith, July, 1976 .

² Interview with Mrs. Clemmie Harrell Ring, August, 1976.

³ Interview with Joe J. Jernigan, December, 1975.

along the way to stand back as the coffin passed in order to avoid contagion. Some who helped to carry the coffin from the cart to the grave were of the opinion that it contained rocks rather than a corpse and believed the supposed "corpse" to be well on his way to Texas. There are those who are alive today who know the location of the grave, although a tombstone was never placed there.

The most widely known legend originating in the area was that of the disappearance of the Black Fox in the spring which now bears his name, which has been related in a previous section of this history.

UNUSUAL EVENT

When Ernest Smith was in his early twenties (1891-95), an unusual event occurred which he witnessed as he was putting his horse in the barn for the night. He had been to see a girl friend and had just arrived home some time after dark when a "star" whizzed by the barn making a sizzling, hissing noise and lighting up the countryside as it went. Ernest Smith never found the object that startled him that night, but he told his children and grandchildren about this unusual experience several times over the years. It was assumed that it could have been a meteor and that it probably burned itself out in the atmosphere.

In February of 1976, almost ninety years later and eight years after Ernest Smith's death, it was learned by the writer that a boy found an object which may have been a meteorite about two miles from Ernest Smith's home-place. In a letter of February 24, 1976, Jack R. Mankin wrote that, around 1910, his oldest brother, Hendrick, brought to the house an object about the

size of a skull which was quite heavy and had a melted look on the outside. Judging by its weight, Mr. Mankin believes it was an iron containing meteorite rather than just stone. The Mankin family used it as a door prop. The idea he has of the parent meteorite is that it is "roughly the size of a barrel and was almost, if not quite, buried in the earth." Since igneous rocks are not found in this area, he believes this one to be significant.¹ More meteors are said to survive their passage through our atmosphere in the evening than in the morning hours.² The parent meteorite has been an object of search in recent years by several people, but it has not been located at this time.

¹ Letter from Jack R. Mankin, February 24, 1976.

² Charles P. Olivier, "Meteorite." Encyclopedia Americana, 1974, Vol. 18, p. 713b.

CHURCHES

The United Baptist Church of Christ

The Missionary Baptists organized a church at Fletcher's Schoolhouse on June 9, 1843, and for the following six years the church met in this one room log structure which stood a little more than a mile from Murfreesboro and about two and one half miles northwest of Black Fox Spring.¹ Although it was closer to Murfreesboro than to the spring, it is mentioned here because it was the first church known to have assembled near the Black Fox Spring settlement. Calling themselves the United Baptist Church of Christ, they selected Burrell Gannaway, John Mollow, and James Fletcher as deacons.² On August 12, 1843, the church became affiliated with the Concord Association and Joseph H. Eaton was ordained to preach following Robert January who had served as interim pastor.³ The membership included slaves of the members and, upon recommendation from Eaton and January, the Association purchased E. Kelly in 1846 from his owner in order that he might devote his time to preaching to those of his race.⁴ In January of 1849, the congregation left its location at Fletcher's Schoolhouse and moved into its new building on the corner of Sevier and Spring Streets in Murfreesboro.⁵

Mount Hermon Baptist Church

Although Mount Hermon Baptist Church was not established at Dillon until 1879 when a building was erected on the church's present building site, it had its beginnings on Cripple Creek about four miles east of Dillon. In a land survey book of Rutherford County, 1822-1936, the surveyor records having

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¹ Homer Pittard, Pillar and Ground (Murfreesboro, 1968), p. 9.

² Ibid., p. 11. ³ Ibid., p. 14. ⁴ Ibid., p. 18. ⁵ Ibid., p. 24.

surveyed four acres of land including the Cave Spring Meeting House on Cripple Creek for John Earwood (sic) and Jonathan Hall, trustees for the Baptist denomination of Christians on Nov. 5, 1825.¹ On Nov. 2, 1856 its members adopted the Articles of Faith and Church Covenant; its members being Jacob and Isack Yearwood, John Stroope, John Yearwood, John Prater, Jane and Mary Beasley, Sally Cotton, Samuel and Eliza Cox, Samuel Mitchell, William and Cinthia Zumbro. John McFadden and Emily Warren.² After their building burned in 1877, they worshipped in different places until 1879 when another building was erected on the northeast corner of Mt. Hermon Road and Bradyville Pike under the name of Mt. Hermon Baptist Church.³ The original deed could not be located, but it is thought that the land was given by Mrs. Ann Stewart, a daughter of Archibald and Margaret Jetton Sloan.⁴

William Yearwood was one of the leaders of the Mt. Hermon Church in the early 1900's. When the men and boys lingered outside on Sundays after worship had begun, Mr. Yearwood would go to the door and urge them to come in. He and wife Sarah Sloan Yearwood and their large family lived in a two story, white house with fancy bannistered verandas on the west and south sides, both upstairs and downstairs.⁵ The house,

¹Land Survey, Rutherford County, 1822-1836.

²C. S. Abernathy, "History of Cripple Creek and Mt. Hermon Baptist Church." (Mimeographed sheet). ³Ibid.

⁴Interview with Mrs. Erskine Thompson (nee Mattie Eugenia Sloan), March, 1976. Mrs. Thompson is a great neice of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Yearwood.

⁵Interview with Mrs. Erskine Thompson, March, 1976.

facing west, stood on Yearwood Hill behind the Mt. Hermon church and could be seen for miles around. Many were invited to Sunday dinners by the Yearwoods who were known for their plentiful supply of food and for their hospitality.

During the 1930's Dee Roberts and Ed Yearwood were deacons. Some of the members during those years were members of the families of Jesse Harrell, Ode Medlock, Jim Davenport, Irvin Wallace, Alf Hayes, Arthur Watts, Byron Sloan, and Comer Jakes. Ode Medlock was the father of Woodrow Medlock, pastor of the Bellwood Baptist Church in Murfreesboro; and Jesse Harrell, who worshipped at Mt. Hermon for sixty years, was the father of Mrs. Medlock.¹

In 1939 a small frame building was erected on the same site to replace the old church.² A deed was not registered for the church property until 1958. As one was necessary, Mr. and Mrs. Comer Jakes and Mr. and Mrs. Clint Medlock sold the property for one dollar to the Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, who, in turn, deeded the property to the following trustees of Mt. Hermon: Adam Phillips, Leo Harrell, Dorris Willard, Charles Lowe, Raymond Harrell.³ In 1961, a pastorum was built and additional property was purchased for the church in 1966 from W. M. Wolfe and Lloyd R. Wolfe on Mt. Hermon's southeast boundary.⁴ Trustees at this time were Cliff Ghee, Jr., J. H. Davenport, and James O. Rowland. A new brick educational unit was added in 1967 and the church entered its new brick sanctuary in April of 1971.⁵

¹ Interview with Mrs. Jim Davenport (nee Bertha Tolliver), January 1976.

² Abernathy (Mimeographed sheet).

³ Rutherford Co., Deed Book, 125, pg. 47; Book 127; pg. 162.

⁴ 1972 Directory of Mt. Hermon Baptist Church, pg. 2.

⁵ Ibid.

Through the years the following have served as pastors of the Cripple Creek and Mt. Hermon Baptist Churches: Pastors A. J. McNabb, Jared Warren, Hutchinson, Vance, Carr, Grimes, John T. Oakley, Gregory Ogles, McPherson, W. J. Watson, W. G. Mahaffey, Jagers, Ratcliff, S. P. Devault, J. D. Barbee, O. T. Drake, Hoyte Huddleston, Elvin L. Burnett, J. O. Oglesby, Frank Messick, C. S. Abernathy,¹ Lewis York, Eldrich Dorris, Nolan Tobias, and, at the present time, James A. Davis.²

Some have been ordained to preach by the Mt. Hermon Church. Woodrow Medlock was ordained on the third Sunday of October, 1937, and on April 4, 1943, Frank Messick was ordained.³ Later, Joe White was ordained, and on May 6, 1973, Randy Sledge was licensed to preach.⁴

The deacons of the church at this time are Leo Harrell, James Rowland, James Haynes, Bill Baines, Joe McCluskey, R. Q. Jaco, and Don Harrell.⁵

The Prosperity Baptist Church

About four years after the Cripple Creek Baptist Church was established, the black members of the Baptist faith established the Prosperity Baptist Church. The church first met about 1860 in a building on the Virgil Haynes place on the northwest of Tennie Beard's farm, less than a mile away from its present location.⁶ The first building at the present location had been

¹ Abernathy (Mimeographed sheet).

² Interview with Mrs. Bertha Davenport, January, 1976.

³ Abernathy (Mimeographed sheet).

⁴ Interview with Nathan Sledge, January, 1976.

⁵ Interview with Mrs. Davenport, January, 1976.

⁶ Interview with Robert Randolph, February, 1976.

erected by 1892 when the church acquired a deed to its property; William Hope deeded one acre to Zack Gresham, William Fleming, George Francis, and Caleb Jarrett as trustees "in consideration of their having erected a church house for the purpose of worshipping Almighty God according to their faith and belief as they understand the Scriptures."¹ The property was bordered by that of Taz Fleming, Caroline Lasseter, and Rube McKnight.²

Older members remember its history. Robert Randolph recalls several facts: The first pastor known to have served the Prosperity Church was William Henderson. William Henderson, Taz Fleming, and Simon Leigh were leaders of this church during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. Other pastors who have served were Lewis McCord, Charles Evans, Aron Jordan, Hendrix, J. T. Ridley, Charles Vanderleer, Harry Alexander, George Wade, Marcel Kellar, and John Oscar Jordan, who is pastor at the present time.³ Tennie Beard said that his father, Albert Beard, and Bill Fleming bought a bell for the first church constructed on the present site, but the bell has not been used by the church since its present building was constructed in 1960. The old bell, a five tone bell weighing fifty pounds, is now in the possession of Mr. Beard, the oldest deacon in the Prosperity Baptist Church at this time.⁴

According to Mrs. Sarah Lyons, some of the leaders during the early years of this century were her father, Nels Lasseter, Mr. and Mrs. William Henderson, Mrs. Lizzie Grissom, and Mrs. Sarah Leigh.

¹Register's Office, Ruth. Co., Tenn., Deed Book 34, p. 52.

²Ibid. ³Interview with Robert Randolph, February, 1976.

⁴Interview with Tennie Beard, February, 1976.

Mrs. Lyons' son, Samuel McHenry Lyons, was ordained to preach at the Prosperity Baptist Church and serves as pastor of the Cedar Grove Baptist Church in Eagleville.¹ Simon and Sarah Leigh's daughter, Mrs. Mollie Leigh Jones, has served her community as a teacher and later served throughout Middle Tennessee as a registered nurse.² The Leigh's grandson, Judge Luther Glanton, Jr. of Des Moines, Iowa, has been nominated for District Court Judge by the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce whose nominating commission said he "has been an invaluable asset to the community and has conducted himself in the highest tradition of the court."³ Judge Glanton's father, Luther Glanton, Sr., served as a teacher at Dilton's Gladeview School during the 1930's.⁴

Robert Randolph reports that the deacons in the Prosperity Church of today are Tennie Beard, James Randolph, Kenneth James, James Beard, Charles Bass, George Sneed, and himself. Tolbert Sawyer Randolph, son of Robert and Mary Randolph was ordained at this church, but presently preaches for the Hurricane Creek Baptist Church near Shelbyville.⁵ The Prosperity Baptist Church has about sixty members at the present time.⁶

Morgan's Chapel / Pleasant Grove Church

Although no longer in use, the building of the Pleasant Grove Methodist Church still stands on the east side of the Dilton Cemetery. On Sept. 15, 1873,

¹ Interview with Mrs. Sarah Lasseter Lyons, Dec., 1976. ² Ibid.

³ Murfreesboro, Daily News Journal, Aug. 22, 1976, p. 20.

⁴ Rutherford Co., School Supt., School Records, Gladeview folder.

⁵ Interview with Mrs. Mary Goodman Randolph, March, 1976.

⁶ Interview with Tennie Beard, January, 1976.

Nace S. Overall deeded to B. M. Neal, Robert M. Ward, W. P. Henderson, John W. Overall, W. T. Overall, W. F. Overall, and Nace S. Overall (including himself) one acre of land for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church South.¹ The building was probably completed in 1874 and was used as a subscription school as well as a meeting place for the church.² The studs of the building are of hewed cedar poles and the nails are square.³

In 1878 the church was known as Morgan's Chapel and is labeled as such on the Beers Map. We know from a descendant of William McAllister Moore, for whom Moore Hill was named, that he was a member of this church in the early days of its existence.⁴ Reuben and Catherine Harrell, who had moved into the neighborhood by this time, were members, and their son, E. M. Harrell, later an elder of the Murfreesboro district of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, often preached at Pleasant Grove.⁵ Pastor Tucker is said to have preached for the church around 1896.⁶ It is not known for whom Morgan's Chapel was named, but it is reasonable to assume that it was named for a man who preached there. J. W. Cullom mentions in his book, Warm Hearts and Saddlebags, a Methodist minister named G. A. Morgan who preached a funeral of a prominent man in Murfreesboro in 1906.⁷

H. E. Baker, pastor of the Pleasant Grove Church in 1919 and 1920, recalled that stewards at that time were John Overall, William Knox, and James

¹Register's Office, Ruth. Co., Tenn., Deed Book 19, p. 349.

²Ibid.

³Interview with Roy E. Tarwater, December, 1975.

⁴Interview with Mrs. Margaret Lee Knox Sanders, January, 1976.

⁵Interview with Mrs. Clemmie Harrell Ring, February, 1976.

⁶Ibid.

⁷J. W. Cullum, Warm Hearts and Saddlebags (n.p.), p. 241.

Delbridge and that John Overall was song leader and the keeper of the keys to the building. Mr. Baker remembered staying often in the home of L. D. Harrell when he came here from Woodbury to preach. Other members at this time included the Robert N. Justice, George Weeks, and William Elrod families, Mrs. Jesse Gilley, Mr. W. Frank Overall, and Mr. Tom Overall.¹ Uncle Dave Macon, of Grand Ole Opry fame, visited the church from time to time and led singing on some occasions.²

In the late 1920's, Neal D. Frazier, an English professor at Middle Tennessee State Normal School in Murfreesboro, served the Pleasant Grove Church with one afternoon service a month.³ James Reed Cox, now Tennessee Conference Historian of the United Methodist Church, began serving this congregation of about eleven in the fall of 1929. Mr. Cox remembers that he and his wife organized a Sunday School before the regular preaching services on Sunday afternoons and every summer they conducted a week's revival. Some members of the church mentioned by him as having attended during his period of service were Mrs. Roy E. Tarwater and her daughter, Frances (now Mrs. Frances Johns); Mrs. George H. Lynch and her son Jack (Dr. Howell J. Lynch); Mrs. Lela B. Pate and her daughter Aileen (Mrs. Aileen Bilbrey); the George Landrum and Thomas Paschal families, and Mr. and Mrs. William Knox and their daughter Margaret Lee (now Mrs. Robert Sanders).⁴ Mrs. Tarwater, a granddaughter of Reuben Harrell, served as church organist.⁵ Mrs. Sanders is a granddaughter of William McAllister

¹ Interview with Rev. H.E. Baker, December, 1975.

² Interview with Roy E. Tarwater, January, 1976.

³ Letter from Rev. James Reed Cox, December 8, 1975. ⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Interview with Mrs. Frances Tarwater Johns, March, 1976.

Moore, and Mrs. Lynch is a granddaughter of Nace S. Overall. The congregation disbanded in the early 1940's; the last funeral conducted there was for Mrs. Thomas Pascal (nee Lizzie Overall) in 1943.¹

Those who attended church at Pleasant Grove in the 1930's remember rocks in the front yard of the church which marked graves. The deed to the property indicates there to be several graves there, "it having been used as a burying ground many years ago for the servants of Isaac Jetton."² In the early years of the church's existence, before the black Methodists constructed Walkup's Chapel, they worshipped with the white Methodists at Pleasant Grove.³

Walkup's Chapel / Gray's Chapel

On December 10, 1877, Lamb and Agnes Smith deeded to Starling Philips, James Blackstock, and Lamb Smith, as trustees of the Methodist Church known as Walkup's Chapel, one fourth of an acre of land bound by property owned by Abe Carney and William Mayberry.⁴ The church was probably built during that year and its location was just around the corner from the present location of the Prosperity Baptist Church on Mt. Hermon Road. In the 1890's, its pastor was Charlie Todd.⁵ Some of the members at that time were Mrs. Jo Lasseter, Mrs. Tulley Weatherly, Mrs. Hannah Henderson, Miss Mariah Lasseter and Mrs. Sally Carney.⁶ In the early years of this century, Nell Lyons rang the church bell of Walkup's Chapel on

¹ Interview with Mrs. Cannon J. Overall, January, 1976.

² Register's Office, Ruth. Co., Tenn., Deed Book 19, p. 349.

³ Interview with Roy E. Tarwater, January, 1976.

⁴ Register's Office, Ruth. Co., Tenn., Deed Book 25, p. 220.

⁵ Interview with Tennie Beard, January, 1976.

⁶ Interview with Mrs. Mary Lizzie Beard, January, 1976.

Sunday mornings and for funerals.¹ In 1928 the church moved its location a short distance away when John Beard and his wife, Lena, sold one acre of land to the following trustees: William Goodman, William Gordon Ernest; Hoyte Henderson, and James Bass.² According to the deed, the church had become known as Walker's Chapel, instead of Walkup's Chapel, by this time. The church was later re-named for J. R. Gray, who preached there for many years. In 1936 the elders and trustees of Gray's Chapel were Robert Henderson, Dick Goodman, Waverly Grissom and J. B. Gordon.³ Gray's Chapel is no longer in active use, although the building still stands in the community.

Keeble's Chapel

Fourteen years before the white people built a Christian Church in the community, the black members of the Christian Church built Keeble's Chapel. In 1880 Isaac Henderson deeded one half acre of land to the trustees of this church, which had been built across the road and about one fourth mile to the east of the Dilton store and next to Mrs. Parrish's southwest corner.⁴ Mrs. Parrish's home site may be found on the 1878 map of Rutherford County. According to the deed, the church stood on the west side of the location of the Dilton School, which was built later and has since been torn down. The trustees named in the deed for this church were Marshall Keeble, Sr., Marshall Keeble, Jr., Robert Keeble, Rusk Henderson, and Isaac Henderson.

¹ Interview with Mrs. Sarah Lasseter Lyons, January, 1976.

² Register's Office, Ruth. Co., Tenn., Deed Book 72, p. 211.

³ *Ibid.*, Book 83, p. 109.

⁴ Register's Office, Ruth. Co., Tenn., Deed Book 25, p. 341.

Mr. Tennie Beard, born in 1884, remembers the church but reports that it did not last for very many years.

Although this church did not enjoy growth or longevity, three of its trustees were closely related to Marshall Keeble, who was, according to his biographer, the most outstanding evangelist of his time in the Church of Christ, black or white.¹ Robert Keeble was his father, Marshall Keeble, Sr., his grandfather, and Marshall Keeble, Jr., his uncle.² The first church that Marshall ever saw was undoubtedly Keeble's Chapel, although it was not the first that he remembered.³ He was born on December 7, 1878, about two and one half miles from Murfreesboro in a log house on the Bradyville Pike.⁴ His father, Robert Keeble, born into slavery, was owned by Major Horace Pinkney Keeble, who owned a small acreage on the Bradyville Pike.⁵ During the Civil War, when the Yankees took the home of Major Keeble, his wife went to Murfreesboro to live with her sister-in-law.⁶ Marshall Keeble, Sr., Marshall's grandfather, traveled with Major Keeble during the war as his valet.⁷ On January 21, 1870, Marshall's grandfather bought forty acres from George G. Tompkins.⁸ This property is indicated with the initials "M. K." on the 1878 map, but deed records show that the small farm was sold on December 23, 1891 to Reuben Harrell.⁹ Robert Keeble moved his family to Nashville in 1882, but young

¹ Julian E. Choate, Roll Jordan Roll (Nashville, Gospel Advocate Co., 1968), p. ix.

²Ibid., p. 14.

³Ibid., p. 16.

⁴Ibid., p. 14.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Register's Office, Rutherford County, Tenn., Deed Book 17, p. 41.

⁹Ibid., Book 33, p. 232.

Marshall spent his summers with his grandparents on their farm.¹ During his last years, he recalled for his biographer pleasant memories of riding the work horse on the farm and enjoying his grandmother's cooking.²

Marshall Keeble, in his adult life, preached all over the nation and throughout the world. He preached in tents, dance halls, tobacco warehouses, log cabins, lumber sheds, prisons, brush arbors. the bush country of Africa, the Far East, and in air-conditioned municipal auditoriums.³ Noted for his use of parables and humor in his sermons, he was unusually effective as an evangelist in the Restoration Movement, which had its beginnings in the United States in the early part of the 19th century with the efforts of Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone.⁴ Keeble is said to have baptized 30,000 people and to have established 350 congregations.⁵

Dilton Christian Church / Dilton Church of Christ

The building for the Christian Church, which became known as the Dilton Church of Christ during the early part of the 1900's, was built in 1894.⁶ According to Joe J. Jernigan, Mrs. Alexander T. Smith donated the lumber for construction of the building from her farm. Mr. Jernigan remembers going with his father, William Jernigan, to haul the poplar logs from her farm to the sawmill.⁷ Dr. and Mrs. J. M. Dill gave the land for the church, which first began meeting in their home in 1883,⁸ and their home continued to be "home" for the preachers who came and went. The original organizers were, besides the Dills, John Nelson, Philip Mankin, Jack

¹ Choate, p.14.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Earl Irvin West, The Search for the Ancient Order, vol. 1 (Nashville, Gospel Advocate Co., 1953), p.18.

⁵ Choate, p. xiii.

⁶ Register's Office, Ruth. Co., Tenn., Deed Book, 35, p.517.

⁷ Interview with Joe J. Jernigan, December, 1975.

⁸ Raymond B. Harrell, "The Dill Family" (Mss., n.d.), n.pag.

Mankin, John Benton Mankin and William Jernigan.¹

Joe Jernigan recalls that Charles M. Pullias preached for this church when he was about eighteen years of age. The first protracted meetings were held by H. G. Fleming and C. S. Denton.² G. C. Brewer preached in protracted meetings at the church in 1908, 1909, and 1910.³ Other preachers who came to conduct meetings were L. L. Brigance, I. B. Jones, Charles Brewer, John T. Smithson, E. P. Smith.⁴ The time for the meeting was usually set for the first available two weeks of the preacher's time after crops were laid by, which happened to be about the third week in July during the very hottest summer weather.⁵

The appearance of the church as it was in the early 1900's is described by Jack R. Mankin in his autobiography:

...a rather unpretentious frame building set in a low, flat plot of ground on a poorly kept country road... the building was paid for, however. The interior was not any more imposing than its box-like exterior. The pews were hand made and uncomfortable wooden benches. The walls were ceiled and had never been painted or varnished... For the few occasions on which the building was used at night, there were coal oil lamps with reflectors back of them around the walls.⁶

Around 1912 to 1918, the church is known to have been composed of about twenty families. Besides the Dills, there were the John Benton Mankin, Ernest Smith, Will Harris, Arthur Tolbert, Albert McCrary, and Oscar Harrell families, Mrs. Fannie Overall and her children, Ike Mayo, Weck and Oscar Mankin, Mrs. Lola Mankin and her children, the Arnettes, and Richard Carter, who led the singing.⁷ Mr. Mankin provides us with a

¹ Murfreesboro, Daily News Journal, Oct. 21, 1962, p.10.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Jack R. Mankin, "Autobiography" (Mss., n.d.), p.17.

⁶ Ibid., p.13.

⁷ Ibid., p.14.

description of the manner in which the church carried out its mundane tasks of cleaning and heating the building in those days:

In theory, the building was to be heated by a large cast iron stove in one corner. In practice, it wasn't heated very much. The windows were few, small and propped up with sticks when they were open. Screens had not yet become a necessary convenience. Country people were not afraid of wasps and dirt daubers which inhabited the building in abundance. Spiders, too, liked the quietness of it and built webs between the pews and from the ceiling. Dr. Dill's wife served as voluntary janitor and usually had most of them cleaned up before Sunday morning... In the winter time it was the duty of the first arrivals to build the fire. This was no small chore as there was seldom any paper or kindling, and the ashes from the last week needed taking out. After getting there early several times and having to build the fire, Papa began to carry a bundle of kindling and a coal oil cob (a cob soaked in kerosene) so as to be prepared. There wasn't much need for rivalry for the honor of being the first there. We children, to avoid having to do any work in connection with the fire, usually ran into the surrounding wood to hunt for persimmons or hickory nuts. We rarely found any, but we got away from any responsibility for the fire.¹

Mr. Mankin goes on to describe the people and the activities in and around the church on Sunday mornings:

The congregation arrived piecemeal. All of them were farmers, and most of them lived a mile or more away. The Harrises were among the first arrivals. They had a two seated surrey with a top that looked like an inverted mortar box with fringe around it. Mr. Will Harris and wife, Lela, were blest by being the parents of boys, Ellis and Ray, about the age of Clyde and me. I privately thought that Mr. Harris was still further blessed in having only the slightest fringe of hair left to comb and one of the roundest and shiniest bald heads I ever saw. Mrs. Harris always brought a wicker basket that contained the communion emblems and linen, spotlessly clean, for the communion table. I thought then and I still think

¹ Jack R. Mankin, "Autobiography" (Mss., n.d.), p.14.

now, that if there was ever a good, kind, generous, hospitable man, Will Harris was he. . . After the horses were securely hitched, the men folk and what boys that had not gone to the woods, would saunter toward the steps as if they had formed a good resolution to go in immediately, but once close to the steps, they faltered, started to discuss the crops or the weather until finally Mr. Harris would reluctantly break away, go inside the door, stick his head back out and announce, after ceremoniously looking at his watch, that he expected they had better come in and "lets get started." . . . Once in and seated, Richard Carter would take charge. The first verse of the first song was the signal for us children who had taken to the woods to get back and we came scurrying. . . Several songs, which members would select, prayers usually led by Dr. Dill, Papa, or Mr. Harris, the Sunday School lesson, and communion usually composed the service. What it lacked in beauty. . . was generously made up for in sincerity, and I still feel that the Kingdom of Heaven would be nearer realization today if there were more congregations whose devoutness went all through the week with them as it did with the members of that one.¹

During the 1930's and early 1940's, Will Harris, Cannon Overall, Calvin Carter, Ben Arnette and P. V. Irby were some of the leaders of the Dilton Church of Christ.² William Harrell remembers that the old building was torn down and the present building was completed in 1963. Today's congregation is made up of about fifty members. Its leaders include two grandsons of Dr. Dill: William and Wesley Harrell, J. W. Duncan, Herbert Batey and Carl Dabbs. Ben Arnette served as a leader until his death on May 20, 1976. The minister at this time is T. Coy Porter, a faculty member at Middle Tennessee State University. Other ministers who have preached regularly for this congregation in recent years are Charles Locke, Granville Brown, Fred Winslett, Boone Douthitt, and Leon Stancliff.³

¹ Jack R. Mankin, "Autobiography" (Mss., n.d.), p. 16.

² Murfreesboro, Daily News Journal, loc. cit.

³ Interview with William Harrell, March, 1975.

The Bible Church of Jesus

In an interview with Mrs. Mabel J. Mofield, the following facts were learned about the most recently established church in Dilton, the Bible Church of Jesus. Mrs. Mofield is prayer band leader for the church and was married to the church's founder, James P. Mofield. Averaging 65 to 70 members, the church was founded by James Mofield on Battle Avenue in 1947, and in 1971 a building was purchased from the Apostolic Church at a location on Bradyville Road two miles southeast of Dilton Store.¹ The Apostolic Church came to the community from California in 1969 with the belief that California was doomed; the earthquakes that had occurred in that state were considered a sign of impending destruction.² When the Apostolic Church sold its building, it moved on to Virginia.³ The trustees of the Bible Church of Jesus are Gains Walker, Douglas Mofield, Charles Spurlock, Powell Pendergrast, Don Stacy and Luther Judkins.⁴ Elder Mofield served as pastor of the church from 1947 until his death in 1974, and Elder Olen Carden presently serves the congregation as pastor with the assistance of Thomas Hewell.⁵ Mrs. Mofield's father, Benjamin Rice Judkins, served as trustee for the church until his death at ninety-seven years of age in 1973.⁶ Douglas Mofield, a son of Mr. and Mrs. James P. Mofield, serves as song leader for the church, and his wife, Dorothy, is secretary treasurer.⁷

¹ Interview with Mrs. Mabel Judkins Mofield, March, 1976.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Interview with Mrs. Mabel Judkins Mofield, March, 1976.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

The First Schools

The first school believed to have been in the neighborhood near Black Fox Spring was closer to Murfreesboro than to the spring; however, it is mentioned here since it was attended by children known to have lived in the Fox Camp community. Anson and Fanny Nelson, in their biography of Sarah Childress Polk, wrote that Sarah went with her brothers to "the common school."¹ In a newspaper account of the highlights in the life of John Whitsett Childress, John Woods tells of attending school with him and his sister, Sarah, "in a little log house just over there (pointing across the field). Our teacher was Daniel Elam."² Major Woods lived about a mile out of town on the road which led to Bradyville.³ The 1878 map of Rutherford County shows the J. F. Fletcher farm to have been close enough to the Woods property to have been the location of the school "just across the field" from John Woods; however, there is no evidence that the Fletcher family owned the plantation at the time Joel Childress' children and John Woods attended school at this location. Fletcher's School was a one room school built of logs and known to have been in existence prior to the Civil War.³ It is mentioned in the minutes of the Missionary Baptist Church which met at the schoolhouse for a period of six years from 1843 until 1849.⁴

The Subscription School

The deed of 1873 to the property donated by Nace S. Overall for the

¹ Nelson, p. 4.

² Nashville, Daily American, loc. cit.

³ Pittard, p. 9. ⁴ Ibid., pp. 9, 24.

Methodist Church at Dilton reveals plans for the church building to be used also for a subscription school.¹ Assuming that the building was completed soon after the time of the deed, this school began its four-month sessions² about 1874. Its first and only known teacher, Charles McNabb, rode his horse each day of the school session from Burk's Hollow.³ Burk's Hollow is located amid the steep hills ten miles southeast of the school. Mr. McNabb's salary was eight dollars a month.⁴ Among his students were Elisha Monroe Harrell, Lorenzo Dow Harrell, Matilda Harrell, Minnie Overall, Tom Overall, and Ernest Smith.⁵

Elisha M. Harrell, who grew up to preach many times at this church, was among the mischievous little boys who went to school to Mr. McNabb. One typical mischievous prank is told by his niece. It seems that he and other boys liked to catch fleas, which were easy to find because hogs made themselves at home underneath the schoolhouse floor. They took the fleas, one at a time, to the front of the school room, and on the pretense of wanting to ask their teacher a question, they would drop one down his back. At recess, to the delight of the boys, the teacher would disappear into the woods nearby, presumably to rid himself of the fleas.⁶

Ernest Smith recalled that Mr. McNabb would select a boy to go with him to the well on the Overall farm on days when the weather prohibited the entire class from going. No boy wanted to be chosen, preferring to stay behind to have some fun while the teacher and his helper went for water.

¹ Register's Office, Ruth. Co., Tenn., Deed Book, 19, p. 349.

² Interview with Mrs. Clemmie Harrell Ring, February, 1976.

³ Interview with Wm. Hoyt Smith who quoted Ernest L. Smith, Jan. 1976.

⁴ Interview with Mrs. Ring, Feb., 1976. ⁵ Ibid. ⁶ Ibid.

On days when the weather was pleasant, the children would all go to the well with Mr. McNabb for water. The well was a "dug well" with a platform of planks over it. Mr. Smith said he had some concern about the water drawn from the well because of the large cracks between the planks and the gaggle of geese which were also frequent visitors to the well.¹

The subscription school continued in existence until 1882, when a public school called Oaklands Academy was established.²

Oaklands Academy

On June 5, 1880, William H. Smith and his son, Alexander T. Smith, deeded an acre of land (on the corner of property presently owned by Hoyt Smith at a location where Overall Road, Wilson Road and Lytle Creek Road come together) to W. J. Knox and others as school directors for the 18th district.³ The deed indicates that this property was bordered on the west by property of John W. Childress. A school was built in 1882 after considerable controversy over its location.⁴ Prior to the school's construction, William Yearwood hauled the lumber during the night from the corner deeded by the Smiths to a location about a mile away on the corner of the Bradyville Turnpike and Overall Road, and on the next day, Jasper Knox had the lumber moved back to its first location and the new school was soon constructed.⁵ Because of the large oak trees in the school yard, the school was named Oaklands Academy.⁶ According to Mrs. Clemmie Ring, Oaklands

¹Ernest L. Smith, "Memories of My Early Life" (Ms., 1961), n. pag.

²Ibid.

³Register's Office, Ruth. Co., Tenn., Book 25, p. 212.

⁴ Interview with Joe J. Jernigan, Dec., 1975.

⁵Ibid.

⁶ Interview with Hoyt Smith, December, 1975.

was a two-teacher school having two rooms and a side room called "the music room." Some who served as teachers were Lee Yearwood, John Lee, Lavata Mitchell, Flint Speer, John Northcutt, Joel Coates, Ona Morrison, Mattie Tucker, Elisha M. Harrell, Flora Montgomery, Emma Ring and Stanton Smith.¹ In 1885 the average teacher's salary in the public schools was twenty-five dollars per month.² The length of the school term was four to five months.

A more serious controversy arose in 1896 than had occurred over the school's location. Most of the details have been told by Mrs. Ring, the author's great aunt. Edgar Puryear and John Harrell were prospective teachers at Oaklands. L. D. Harrell, a school director, interviewed the two men in his home one evening, after which they slept together in the guest room. On the following morning at the breakfast table, Mr. Harrell made known his preference for Mr. Puryear, a man, twenty-seven years old. That day, January 15, 1896, John Harrell and Edgar Puryear became involved in an argument over the appointment at the Dilton store operated by Jim Tolbert. When the argument increased in intensity, the two men stepped outside the store and John Harrell fatally shot Edgar Puryear.³ Mr. Puryear was buried in the Abernathy Cemetery at Kittrell.⁴ He was the son of P. M. Puryear, a graduate of Princeton University and principal of the Science Hill Academy from 1870 to 1887.⁵ Within the year John

¹ Interview with Mrs. Clemmie Harrell Ring, February, 1976.

² Goodspeed, p. 835.

³ Nashville Banner, Jan. 16, 1896, p. 5.

⁴ Interview with James A. Gilley, March, 1976.

⁵ Interview with Miss Mary Hall, April, 1976.

chart:

B. P. Harrell Harrell & C. Milton Tolbert.



These dressed-up young folks attended old Oakland School on the Bradyville Pike in the good year 1896. Left to right, they are: front row - Mattie Pike (Mrs. R. K. Harrell), Grace Harrell, Viola Nelson, Freeland Harrell, Ona Harrell, Bartie Nelson, John Yearwood, Oscar Jernigan, Milton Tolbert (last four boys seated); second row - Miss Emma Ring (teacher), Cindy Hutton, Shellie Tolbert (Mrs. Jess Jacobs), Vivian Yearwood, Anna Nelson, Mamie Overall, Ella Tolbert (Mrs. Burley Mingles), Cleta Arnold, Lula Tolbert (Mrs. Moran Shuler), Russell Gordon, Tom Overall, Will Helton, Joe Jernigan, White Yearwood, John Lee (teacher, of Eldorado, Okla.); third row - Annie Smith (Mrs. B. H. Lokey), Ethel Nesbitt, Clemmie Harrell (Mrs. B. M. Ring), Ella Hutton, Florence Tolbert (Mrs. Will Hayes), Alice Harrell, Annie Yearwood, Emma Hutton, Ida Hutton, Annie Harrell (Mrs. E. L. Smith), Bettie Arnold, Cora Harrell; back row - Edgar Overall, Virgil Yearwood, Colvin Tolbert, Edd Yearwood, Will Lee, S. N. Overall, X. Gordon, R. L. Tolbert, Will Yearwood, John Gordon, Ellis Arnold, Frank Tolbert.

Harrell died of typhoid fever before his case came up for trial. A list of students who attended Oaklands around this time may be seen with the school picture included in this paper.

Gladeview School

On September 13, 1884, one half acre was deeded to school directors J. C. Coleman, W. J. Knox, and M. Frank Overall by F. G. Carney for a school house "now standing on the lot."¹ Gladeview school was originally on Mt. Hermon Road near Walkup's Chapel, which was just around the corner from the Prosperity Baptist Church.² In 1909 John Overall deeded a half acre for Gladeview School, but it was moved during that year to its later location across the road from Prosperity Baptist Church.³ Some of the teachers at Gladeview were Henry and Lula Bright, Leanna Smith, Annie Ransom, Luther Glanton, Robert Meeks and Mollie Leigh (Mrs. Anse Jones).⁴ There were also teachers named Robinson, Bass and McGowan.⁵ Tennie Beard, a student in the school in the 1890's, recalls that they went to school in January, February, May, June, August and part of September. School was not in session, he said, between February and May because the children were needed to assist with the planting of corn in March and cotton in April. School was out again in September when cotton was ready to be picked. Mr. Beard adds that in those days school began with a prayer and

¹ Register's Office, Ruth. Co., Tenn., Book 27, p.417.

² Interview with Tennie Beard, January, 1976.

³ Register's Office, Rutherford Co., Tenn., Book 50, p.585.

⁴ Interview with Tennie Beard, January, 1976.

⁵ Rutherford County, School Superintendent's Office, School Records, Gladeview folder.

a song and subjects studied were reading, writing, and arithmetic.¹

Another school for the children in the black community at Dilton was established about a year after Gladeview, but its name is not known. School directors W. P. Henderson, W. A. Sloan and James Gilley were deeded one half acre by Marshall and Mary Keeble.² Its location was on the Bradyville Pike about two miles northwest of the Dilton Store on property presently owned by R. C. Bell.³ At that time, the land deeded to the school directors was bordered by property owned by M. Crass and Reuben Harrell.⁴ The school remained in existence until about 1910.⁵

Dilton School

During the winter of 1898, the Oaklands schoolhouse was rolled through the fields to a new location three-tenths of a mile east of the Dilton Store and on the north side of the Bradyville Pike.⁶ When the building began to lean during the early 1920's, it was propped up with cedar poles.⁷ About 1927, when it was considered too deteriorated to be used any longer, it was torn down and replaced by a new building similar to the old one.⁸ Some of the teachers who taught at Dilton School were B. H. Lokey, Ellen Brown, Genoa Bowling, Lela Osborne, Tom Gregory, Sallie McClain, Annie Bell Becton (Mrs. J. D. Roberts), Miss Owen, Elizabeth Puckett (Mrs. Calvin Carter),

¹ Interview with Tennie Beard, January, 1976.

² Register's Office, Rutherford Co., Tenn., Deed Book 28, p.86.

³ Interview with Fred Rogers, May, 1976.

⁴ Register's Office, Ruth. Co., Tenn., Deed Book 28, p.86.

⁵ Interview with Mr. Beard, January, 1976.

⁶ Interview with Mrs. Clemmie Harrell Ring, February, 1976.

⁷ Interview with Ernest Howard Smith, April, 1976.

⁸ Interview with William Hoyt Smith, April, 1976.

Pauline Jennings (Mrs. White Wood), Frank White, Virginia Bock (Mrs. Cannon Overall), Mrs. A. R. Craddock (Nee Alice Hill), Irene Yearwood (Mrs. Kenneth Williamson), Bessie Puckett, Susie Ashley (Mrs. Grover Sneed), Bright Brandon (Mrs. Howard Smith), Elizabeth White (Mrs. Hoyt Davenport), James Haynes, Zella Potts, Macy Whitfield, Grady Biggers (Mrs. White), Christine Harrell (Mrs. Ray Donnell).¹ In the 1930's, Mrs. J. Ellis Harris (nee Clara Parman) directed the parents and friends of the school in the performance of stunts, skits, and songs which she had written. The community derived much enjoyment and the school acquired a stage as a result of these efforts.² The foundation of the school, being still in place, reveals the school to have been approximately 66 feet in length. The width of the building was 34 feet, except at the rear, where it measured 23 feet. A small room across the front of the building was used for a kitchen when the hot-lunch program began about 1936 with Mrs. Ann Jones in charge of the preparation of the food. Between the kitchen and the stage was the large class room.³ On the southeast side of the building were two small rooms and a small porch. A deed to a part of the school property mentions a persimmon tree in the school yard.⁴ The girls at Dilton School were fond of the tree, considering it theirs because it stood behind their privy. In the fall of the year and after the first frost, when the fruit of the tree grew ripe and fell to the ground, there was always a sharp increase in

¹ Interview with Mrs. Ernest Howard Smith, April, 1976.

² Interview with Mrs. J. Ellis Harris, April, 1976.

³ Interview with Mrs. Ernest Howard Smith, April, 1976.

⁴ Register's Office, Ruth. Co., Tenn., Deed Book 55, p.506.

the number of girls who held up their hands to ask to be excused from class. More often than not, their thoughts were on the tree and the newly fallen fruit which might be found beneath it.¹ The school and the tree are gone, but the foundation of the school and the roots of the tree are still there. The school closed in 1942 when the children began to be bussed to the consolidated grade schools in the town of Murfreesboro² and the tree fell during a severe storm of June 20, 1970.³

Henderson School

Henderson School, according to Jack R. Mankin, was a reasonable facsimile of Whittier's schoolhouse. The schoolhouse was "T" shaped with one large room and two small rooms on each side. It was a frame building with weatherboarding on the outside and wood ceiling on the inside. The roof was covered with wood shingles and there was a belfry on the front containing a bell which called the students in to "books." "Literally," Jack Mankin writes, "we were taught reading, writing and 'rithmetic to the tune of a hickory stick, except that privet switches were more available and made an acceptable substitute for hickory."⁴ The school was located on the Manchester Pike near the southeast corner of that pike and Dilton-Mankin Lane, but on the opposite side of the pike and a short distance to the south.⁵ Since a number of children in the Dilton community attended school at Henderson, it is mentioned here. It is thought to have been built in the

¹ Interview with Mrs. Pearl Marlin Smith, May, 1976.

² Interview with Charles B. Smith, February, 1976.

³ Interview with Dr. Fowler Todd, May, 1976.

⁴ Letter from Jack R. Mankin, March 30, 1976.

⁵ Ibid.

late 1800's when the Franklin Hendersons owned the plantation. This land with its antebellum house was purchased from the Hendersons by Henry Pfeil in 1897¹ and is presently owned by the Price Harrisons.² Since no deed is on record for the sale or donation of the property for the school, when it was established is uncertain.

A number of teachers who taught at Henderson are remembered by their former students. Professor Parker, who was teaching in 1906 and before, was the first teacher known to have taught at Henderson.³ Some others who taught there were Carroll Brown, Shellie Tolbert, Mattie Overall (Mrs. R. K. Harrell), Mary Snell (Mrs. Ellis Ransom), Fannie Snell, Alline Youree, Ethel McCrary, Ann Puckett (Mrs. Arthur Watts), Bessie Puckett, Willie Mary Watson (Mrs. DeLeon Horton), Irene Downing (Mrs. Andrew Price), Mrs. W. I. Sade (Fannie Robison), Irene Yearwood (Mrs. Kenneth Williamson), and Mary Frank Auberry.⁴ Alline Youree remembers teaching at Henderson in 1914 and 1915 for thirty dollars per month.⁵ By this time, she recalls, school sessions were eight months long. Miss Youree remembers having seventeen children in the early grades in a small room with a stove in the center. John Benton Mankin, who was in first grade at Henderson School the year the school closed (1934) remembers being very much in love during that year with his teacher, Mary Frank Auberry.

¹ Register's Office, Ruth. Co., Tenn., Deed Book 38, p. 269.

² Ibid., Book 186, p. 152; Book 194, p. 6.

³ Letter from Jack R. Mankin, March 30, 1976.

⁴ Interview with Mrs. William M. McNeill (nee Mary Frances Snell).

⁵ Interview with Miss Alline Youree, April, 1976.

⁶ Interview with John Benton Mankin, April, 1976.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

As in all typical communities during the 1800's and early 1900's, before the automobile and consolidated schools, the social activities of the community were closely associated with the school and with the churches, not only for children, but for the adults as well. The "grown folks," as the children called them, especially enjoyed the box suppers which were given to raise money for the school. Each woman of the family, including the daughters who were of marriageable age, would prepare a delicious supper, pack it in a fancy box which had been carefully decorated, and upon arrival at the schoolhouse, place it on a large table with the other boxes. A "crier" (auctioneer) was called in to "cry" the box supper sale. One of the men often called upon to "cry" the Dilton School's box suppers in the early 1900's was John Puckett.¹ The boxes were auctioned to the highest bidders. A young man would bid high to buy the box prepared by his choice of girls because the girl shared the supper with its buyer. Some men who believed their wives to be the best cooks would bid for their boxes, or maybe some bid for fear of a tongue lashing when they got home if they failed to do so! Plays or minstrels were sometimes performed by the parents or by any local talent which could be found. Admission was charged and funds were thereby raised for equipment for the school.² The children derived much pleasure as well as "book learning" from school. At recess periods, they

¹ Interview with William Hoyt Smith, April, 1976.

² Interview with Mrs. J. Ellis Harris, April, 1976.

played games called hares and hounds, ante-over, town ball, mumble peg, roley holey, or skip-to-me-lou. If the weather made it necessary to stay inside for recess, they played games such as clap-in-and-clap-out.

Behind Henderson School was Mr. Pfeil's woods with a dense growth of cedars and a few hardwood trees. There, a good game of hares and hounds could be enjoyed. Two boys, chosen to be "hares", were given a few minutes start. They ran ahead dropping small bits of paper to make a trail for the rest of the boys (the "hounds") to follow. Jack Mankin, a student at Henderson around 1910, writes that this was no small job in a 60 acre plot of dense wood. "But, oh, it was fun, and how we did hate to hear that old bell on the schoolhouse toll the doleful warning that it was just five minutes to books."¹

Roley holey was a marble game, sometimes taken seriously by some boys. Joe Jernigan, who was an elementary school student at Oaklands and at Dilton School, tells of being hit in the leg by a rock by a boy who grew angry with him over a marble game. At ninety three, Mr. Jernigan still has the scar.² Roley holey was a favorite marble game. Four holes were placed in the ground and boys took turns shooting their marbles from hole to hole. The one who got his marbles in the fourth hole first was rewarded with the privilege of shooting marbles at the knuckles of the other boys as they held them to the ground.

Another game with a hard penalty for losing was mumble peg, which

¹ Jack Mankin, "Autobiography" (Ms., n.d.), p. 33.

² Interview with Joe J. Jernigan, December, 1975.

was played with pocket knives. Every boy carried a pocket knife. Many older men who are in their sixty's and seventy's today carry pocket knives because they acquired the habit when they were boys. Mr. Jernigan recalled the rules: The players took turns throwing their knives at the ground with both blades out. If the knife stuck in the ground with the blade straight out, certain points were scored; if it stuck in the ground by the blade which was at an angle, a certain number of points were scored. The boy who scored the most points in the game had the privilege of driving a wooden peg into the ground as far as he could drive it, and the boy who scored the least had to pull the peg out with his teeth.¹

All the boys and girls would participate in games such as town ball and ante-over. Town ball was similar to baseball. It acquired its name from the rule that the team at bat was "in town." The team out on the field was said to be "in the country." Ante-over was played with a ball made of yarn from old socks wound very tightly together to the size of a soft ball. The children divided into two teams and assembled on opposing sides of the school building. When a team member threw the ball over the roof of the school, he yelled "ANTE-OVER!" The child who caught the ball would rush around the school house and try to hit one of the children with the ball. If he succeeded, his team acquired this child as a new member, but if the child dodged the ball successfully, he had to return to his team alone. The game continued until one side lost all its team members to the other side or until recess ended, in which case, the team with the most members won

¹ Interview with Joe J. Jernigan, December, 1975.

the game

Clap-in-and-clap-out was an indoor game. The girls would remain in the room and the boys would go out of the room or vice versa. A girl would call for a particular boy to the doorkeeper, who would call him in. When he entered the door, the girls began to clap. If he sat down by the girl who called for him, he "stuck" as the clapping ceased. If he did not, the clapping increased and he was "clapped out" of the room.¹

Jack R. Mankin, in an autobiography for his children, describes his memories of the protracted meetings at the Dilton Church of Christ in the early 1900's, some of which typify the social life of any of Dilton churches. According to Mr. Mankin, nothing could compare with the fellowship, excitement and pleasure provided by the annual church affair known as the "protracted meetin'." The following is paraphrased from Mr. Mankin's manuscript: People came from fifteen to twenty miles away to attend a meeting, where boys had opportunity to meet girls from other communities. Such meetings often resulted in romance and marriage, and in those days, marriage, whether for better or for worse, was for keeps. Young men had opportunity to show off their newly acquired smoking habits, their sideburns and their moustaches, and the girls had a chance to show off their wasp-like waists, their hairdos, and their pretty new organdy or satin dresses. The woods nearby would be full of younger boys who were more interested in whatever the woods contained and in each other than in girls. The women and the girls inside the church awaiting the beginning of the service exchanged

¹ Interview with Mrs. Pearl Marlin Smith, December 1975.

recipes and secrets and every woman carried a fan. Their faces were white with dover chalk and they wore large hats which were attached to their hair with long hat pins. Many of the men would stay outside and talk during the services and later offer the excuse to their wives that there was no more room available inside. The men were dressed in overalls or suits. In the early 1900's there were a few celluloid collars, but these gave way to stiff linencollars worn high up under the chin. The men who wore suits would wear gaudily striped silk shirts, cuff links and sleeve bands to hold the shirt sleeves up. ¹

When the services were over, the family who had the honor of getting the preacher to go home with them for dinner would invite as many others as they could get to come. It was the housewife's day of glory, but it was not easy. The protracted meeting was scheduled for a week in July, the warmest month of the year, and the housewife prepared the meal over a hot stove. If the family could afford it, a servant was hired to help with the cooking and dish washing. There was an unbelievable abundance of food on the table on such a day: "three or four fried chickens fried to a delicious golden brown and served hot from the stove, roast beef or mutton, fried ham, potato salad, slaw, hot biscuits, home made light bread, fried corn, butter beans, stewed tomatoes, pickled peaches, preserves, butter and jelly for dessert - home made ice cream reckoned in gallons, not quarts, and at least two kinds of cakes; to drink - coffee, iced tea, buttermilk or sweet milk" ² When dinner was over, the children came in for the "second table." Mr. Mankin writes:

¹ Jack R. Mankin, "Autobiography" (Ms. n.d.) pp.17-19.

² Ibid., p.20.

It was infinite torment to be helpless and voiceless while the last piece of white meat was eaten or the last good piece of ham had the heart cut out of it. And, it seemed as if they would eat forever! We would think there was a lull and begin to be hopeful when the good housewife would insist that the preacher try some of this or that and then they would start all over again. Our hopes sank as low as the pancreas. Finally, though, they did quit, and then some mother would remember the children hadn't eaten yet. We didn't get much service or choice dishes, but we didn't need much. What we lacked in finesse, we made up for in appetite, and in spite of our thinking a few minutes before that there would not be anything left, I never knew of a child leaving the second table without having had more than he should have eaten; even ice cream.¹

When dinner was over, the women washed dishes and the men would sit under the shade trees and smoke, chew tobacco and talk, and perhaps take a walk to look over the crops until it was time to go home and do the farm chores before going back to "meetin'" that night.²

Social gatherings among the adults often had a serious purpose as well as recreational value. This was true in the case of the schools and the churches, and it was even more true in the black community, where the men enjoyed the fellowship of a lodge in the early 1900's called the United Sons of Relief. Some of the officers who served the lodge were Simon Leigh, Nels Lassiter, Jess Alexander, and Tennie Beard.³ They met once a month and continued to do so for about four years. Their primary purpose was to help one another when there was a need. If a member became ill and unable to work, each of the other members contributed a

¹ Ibid. p. 20.

² Ibid., p. 21.

³ Interview with Tennie Beard, January, 1976.

dollar a week for his family's support until he was able to work again.¹

During the depression years, the "pound supper" was popular in the community. Since times were hard and money scarce during the 1930's, it was probably not practical to invite a very large group to one's home without inviting each family to also bring a pound of food to contribute to the meal. These social gatherings were similar to the "covered dish suppers" with which we are familiar today.

¹ Interview with Mr. Beard, January, 1976.

ROADS, TRADE, AGRICULTURE, AND INDUSTRY

The oldest trading post known to have been in the Dilton area was near the Black Fox Spring many years before Rutherford County was established when traders came from the Cumberland settlement to exchange goods with the Indians.¹ The animal furs which the Indians obtained in the wilderness were in demand by the colonists as well as the Europeans. Because of this demand, traders found it profitable to exchange guns, knives, hatchets, cloth, whiskey, and trinkets for pelts.² The first store known to have been operated in the area by a white settler was Joel Childress' store on the old road near Black Fox Spring.³ In those days stores are said to have sold dry goods, products from the farm and the woods, guns, ammunition, whiskey, and hides.⁴

Dr. J. M. Dill opened a store in 1883⁵ across the Bradyville road and about 200 yards northwest of today's Dilton Store.⁶ By 1900 there were two other stores and two blacksmith shops near Dr. Dill's store.⁷ The blacksmiths were George Blair and William Henderson, and some of the storekeepers were James Hill, Leighton Tolbert, Jim Tolbert, Dave Bivins, Will

¹Sims, p. 210.

² S. E. Scates, A School History of Tennessee (New York: World Book Company, 1925), p. 23.

³ Nashville, Daily American, loc. cit.

⁴ Goodspeed, p. 812.

⁵ Harrell, "The Dill Family", loc. cit.

⁶ Interview with William Hoyt Smith, March, 1976.

⁷ Interview with Joe J. Jernigan, Dec., 1975. Mr. Jernigan is a son of William and Betty Thompson Jernigan, who owned a farm in the Dilton Community across the road and east of Moore Hill.



DILTON STORE



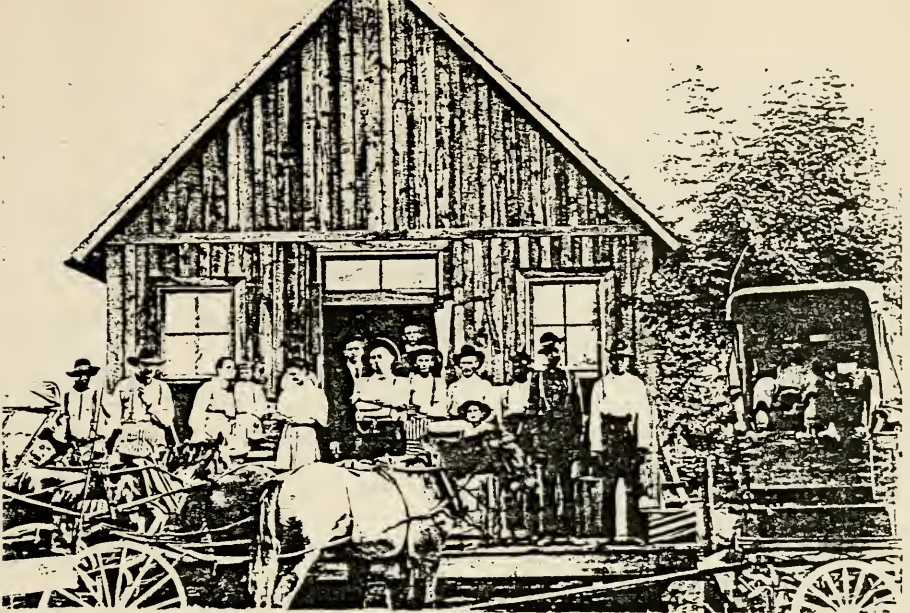
PLEASANT GROVE CHURCH



LYTLE CREEK



DILTON COUNTRYSIDE



A Dillon store of about 1906. Storekeeper Sylvester Willard is standing with arms crossed near the center of the picture. Ernest Smith is second person to the right of Mr. Willard with dark hat and moustache. Mr. Willard's wife and child are standing in front of the window on the left side of the picture.



A Dillon store of about 1900. The store was owned by John Overall and operated by M. V. Baugus. Two people in the picture are said to be Tom Benson and Hugh Kirk, Jr. The store burned around 1904.

Overall, Sylvester Willard, M.V. Baugus, Oscar Harrell, and Grover Arnette.¹ After Dr. Dill, Leighton Tolbert began a term as postmaster in 1893 and Sylvester Willard in 1901.² The post office was discontinued in 1906.³ Oscar Harrell ran the store from about 1910 until 1925.⁴ His son, William Harrell, presently owns and operates the only Dilton store, a concrete block structure. Hatton Adams operated the only store on Moore Hill until 1905,⁵ and Hendrick Mankin was storekeeper at a store on the corner of the Manchester Pike and the old road which led to Dilton during the years from 1914 to 1917.⁶

Agriculture was the main means of livelihood for the people in the community. The first plantation owner raised corn, cotton, and wheat and kept "milch" cows, a yoke of oxen, horses, mules, hogs, chickens, geese and ducks.⁷ The products of the farm which were not used for the families sustenance were sent to market. Mr. Joe Jernigan, a youngster during the 1880's and 1890's remembers that hogs, turkeys, and cattle were driven to Murfreesboro past his home near the Dilton store from farms as far away as Bradyville and that the drivers frequently stopped along the road with the animals to spend the night. The Murfreesboro and Bradyville Turnpike was

¹ Interview with Joe J. Jernigan, December, 1975.

² Henry G. Wray, "Rutherford County Post Offices and Postmasters," Rutherford Co. Historical Society, Publication No. 5, p. 31.

³ Ibid. ⁴ Interview with William Hoyt Smith, March, 1976.

⁵ Interview with Mr. Smith, March, 1976.

⁶ Jack R. Mankin, "Autobiography" (Ms., 1973), p. 180.

⁷ Register's Office, Ruth. Co., Tenn., Deed Book Y, p. 123. These products are mentioned in this deed of 1857 of property from William Nelson to John Nelson. The property was located in the area to become known as Dilton.

in operation at this time, but it had little resemblance to our present concept of a turnpike. The road was barely wide enough for wagons to pass when they met, and horses and cattle would sometimes sink knee deep in mud.¹

Turnpike companies performed valuable service for the people. The companies chartered by the state legislature were made up of men who owned rock crushers, wagons, and teams of horses and who hired drivers and laborers for the purposes of constructing roads and bridges and charging tolls. Some of the toll money was considered income on their investments and the remainder was used for repairs.² The legislature set the amount of toll that could be charged.³ When the Murfreesboro and Bradyville Turnpike Company was chartered in 1855, the directors were L.H. Carney, Levi W. Reeves, E. A. Keeble, and William Spence.⁴ On the day that the turnpike opened, it was toll free and "wagons and carts and horses came out the pike all day."⁵ Receipts recorded by Goodspeed for the Murfreesboro and Bradyville turnpike in 1886 were \$1,793.18 and expenditures were \$1,560.78.⁶ There were three toll gates along the pike about five miles apart. The first was along the road to the northwest of Todd Lake, another was at the foot of Moore Hill, and the third was located in the Donnell's Chapel community.⁷ The directors of the turnpike in 1903 were Charles R. Holmes, W. H. Woods, Hugh Kirk, D. B. Murray and J. C. Carnahan.⁸

¹ Interview with Joe J. Jernigan, December, 1975.

² Joseph H. Parks, The Story of Tennessee (Norman, Okla: Harlow, 1963), p. 185.

³ Acts of the State of Tennessee, 1875, p. 241.

⁴ Ibid., 1855-56, p. 385; 1857-58, p. 373.

⁵ Interview with Roy Tarwater who quoted W. A. Sloan (1853-1933), January, 1976.

⁶ Goodspeed, p. 817.

⁷ Interview with William Hoyt Smith, March, 1976.

⁸ Letter from Joe C. Carr, Sec. of State, Tenn., May 4, 1976.

People in the community took turns working the roads which were not turnpikes with picks and shovels. Gravel was hauled from creek beds in wagon loads pulled by teams of horses. Both men and horses worked hard to keep the roads in good condition, but it seemed a losing battle as both weather and wagon wheels would soon undo what had been done. Alexander T. Smith was appointed overseer of the road between the turnpike and the home of Mrs. Dorothy Philips and served in that capacity from 1873 to 1879.¹

The 1878 map reveals several cotton gins scattered over the Dilton countryside. One was owned by John W. Childress and another by W. Frank Overall. Mr. Frank Overall is also remembered by several people today for his cherry orchard. When the cherries ripened, boys were hired to pick them only if they were qualified by the ability to whistle. Mr. Overall wisely required that the boys whistle while they worked!²

William Yearwood operated a grist mill on his farm in the latter part of the 19th century and in the early part of this century. Most grist mills were propelled by water power, but Mr. Yearwood's mill was powered by a large, stationary gasoline engine which was started by a kitchen match.³ A miller was expected to keep an eighth of the meal which he had ground for the farmer. Some millers were inclined to keep a little more, but Mr. Yearwood was said to have been fair and just in his dealings with the farmers, always giving good measure.⁴ In addition to the grist mill, William Yearwood had a small home broom factory. Some of the farmers in the neighborhood

¹ County Court Clark's Office, Ruth. Co., Tenn., Road Books, 1872-79.

² Letter from Jack R. Mankin, Jan. 12, 1976. ³ Ibid.

⁴ Interview with William Hoyt Smith, March, 1976.

raised broom corn and took their harvests to Mr. Yearwood who made brooms on the shares. Jack Mankin recalls that they were good brooms without the fancy trimming and fancy handles found on today's factory made brooms.¹

John Benton Mankin, father of Jack R. Mankin, was a progressive farmer of the early 1900's who was willing to try new gadgets such as the hay fork. Dr. Mankin was the first farmer in the community to try it. Jack Mankin explains its use in his Autobiography:

"The hay fork was a device for unloading loose hay from a wagon by means of a large fork on a track. The fork was let down into the load of hay and the triggers set to hold it. Then a pair of mules attached to a long rope would pull the fork, hay and all, high up into the roof of the barn where it would roll on the track to the place it was to be tripped. A man pulled the trip rope when the load was where it was wanted, and it dropped from the fork. Mules instead of men furnished the power to unload the hay. It was a sensation in the neighborhood and was the forerunner of many more to be installed by farmers of Dilton."²

From 1906 to 1918 Raleigh W. Marlin owned the property shown on the Beers Map of 1878 as belonging to Jasper Knox, property presently owned by William Elrod.³ Mr. Marlin may be credited with having acquired the first tractor in the community. His daughter, Mrs. Hoyt Smith (nee Pearl Marlin), recalls that she had to meet her father with a bucket of water for the tractor each time he made a round in the field. It was a gasoline or coal oil powered tractor, but it was "thirsty" for water. When it backfired, and it often did, it could be heard throughout the countryside. People came from town and from miles around to see the tractor in operation.⁴

¹ Jack R. Mankin, "Autobiography" (Ms., n.d.), p. 26. ² Ibid.

³ Interview with Mrs. Pearl Marlin Smith, March, 1976.

⁴ Ibid.

John Harris owned and operated a saw mill on the Marlin property near Lytle Creek during the years of 1912 and 1913, when he and his large family lived in the Marlin house.¹ Mr. Harris' daughter, Mrs. Hugh Hooper, recalls that her father was the first man in Dilton to own a car. The car was purchased about 1906 and kept until 1912.²

After having lived in Dilton as a young man, Kelly Harrell moved to Chattanooga with his family and operated a grocery store in that city.³ His daughter, Mrs. J. W. Duncan, provided the following information about her father: Mr. Harrell returned to Dilton in the early 1940's and built a house near the southwest corner of the Bradyville Pike and Overall Road. He purchased two block molds while in Chattanooga and brought them to Dilton, where he made the concrete blocks with which to build his house. His interest stirred by concrete blockmaking as a means of livelihood, he purchased a rock crusher and a block machine. The block making machine is believed to have been the first in Rutherford County. He established the Rutherford County Lime and Block Company and made concrete blocks for sale on his property at Dilton. During World War II, he established the R. K. Harrell Bottling Company. Soft drinks were scarce due to a shortage of sugar. Mr. Harrell obtained a sugar allotment, built and equipped a bottling plant on his property, and bought two trucks with which to distribute the drinks. He marketed the drinks to stores throughout middle Tennessee.⁴

¹ Interview with Mrs. Mildred Harris Hooper, December, 1976.

² Interview with Mrs. Hooper, December, 1976.

³ Interview with Mrs. Nadene Harrell Duncan, March, 1976.

⁴ Ibid.

Roy E. Tarwater and Cannon J. Overall were outstanding agriculturists in the county as well as in the community because of their specialized farming. Mr. Tarwater, who is now retired and lives in Murfreesboro, supplied the following facts about his life and work: Born in Missouri, he came to Rutherford County in 1918 after serving in the army during World War I. He married Susie Mae Harrell in that year and bought a farm at Dillon. Mr. Tarwater did general farming, improving his land and using the latest agricultural methods. He was the first farmer in the community to use contour farming and to build terraces. His specialty was raising certified and foundation seed. When hybrid corn was introduced, he was the first farmer in the county to raise hybrid corn for sale. Seed from Mr. Tarwater's farm was mailed far and wide and planted in several foreign countries such as Italy, Egypt, and other African countries. A processing plant was built on his farm and operated for several years.¹

Cannon Justiss Overall was born to Fannie Justiss and Thomas R. Overall at Dillon in 1899 and lived at his birthplace until his death in 1974.² His daughter, Jean Thompson, provided these facts about her father: In 1924 Mr. Overall married Mary Virginia Bock, who was teaching at Dillon School. Mr. and Mrs. Overall gardened on a large scale and supplied the markets of Murfreesboro with a wide variety of garden vegetables throughout his life. Mr. Overall became a genial and successful salesman of his products. During the Christmas season, he sold evergreens such as holly, mistletoe,

¹ Interview with Roy E. Tarwater, March, 1976.

² Interview with Mrs. William H. Thompson, Jr. (nee Jean Overall), August, 1976.

pine, and cedar in lots and in handmade wreaths. In 1949 he expanded the sage and pepper business by constructing and equipping a concrete block, multi-purpose building used for the processing, packaging, and storing of his homegrown seasonings. Thirteen acres of sage and pepper were grown, processed, and packaged during the years of peak production. Mr. Overall sold to grocery stores throughout middle and west Tennessee these seasonings bearing recipes for their use on the labels.¹

Agriculture continued to be a primary source of income in the Dilton community for thirty-five to forty years into this century. On a joyous day in 1937, the Dilton community acquired electricity.² Some people who lived there at the time remember well just where they were and what they were doing when the lights came on. With this and other technological advancement, this community, as all other communities in the land, began to change. People who lived during those early times remember the good and the bad, but mostly they remember the good and they miss it. The feeling is as one of homesickness. The young think of those times as another world and wonder what they have missed. Today's older generations have had the unique privilege of living in "two worlds" or eras: the agricultural and the industrial.

¹Interview with Mrs. Jean Overall Thompson, August, 1976.

²An entry in the author's diary on January 31, 1937 reads "My grandparents are just now getting their electricity."

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